

# NHH PhD Programme: Submission of Thesis and Public Defence

Below you will find information on the submission of the PhD thesis and the doctoral examination (trial lecture and public defence) for the PhD degree. We have included some of the most relevant parts of the PhD Regulations. The reader is however advised to thoroughly read the document “[Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor degree](#) (PhD) at NHH” which covers all formalities. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the PhD Office:

## THE PHD OFFICE (Section for Doctoral Education)

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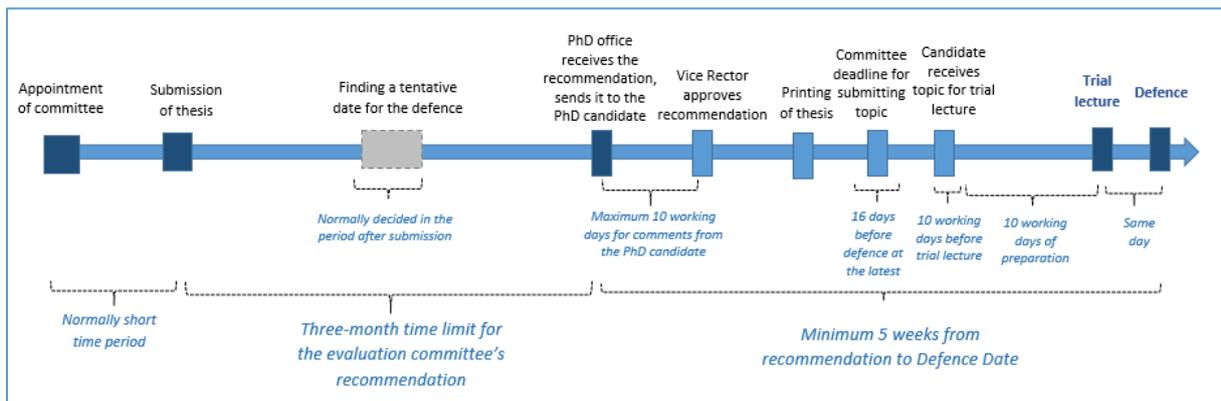
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## OVERVIEW: TIMELINE FROM SUBMISSION TO DEFENCE

The following figure shows the timeline from the time of submission to the time of defence. Below we will describe the roles and obligations of the PhD candidate, the Vice Rector for Research, the department, the evaluation committee, and the PhD Office.



## BEFORE THE DEFENCE: SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

### □ SUBMISSION AND APPLICATION FOR EVALUATION (Section 6-2)

**The Candidate:** When the supervisor indicates that the candidate is ready to submit his/her thesis, the candidate is requested to notify their department and the PhD Office that he/she shortly will be submitting his/her thesis. Please note that the training component must be approved before the thesis submission.

If the PhD thesis is a collection of papers, the thesis should be written in the format given by the journals to which the papers have been (or are planned to be) submitted. Any of the mentioned journal formats may be used in the introductory part of the thesis. If the thesis is a monograph, a format given by a journal or publisher related to the field of research should be used.

The thesis is submitted to [phd@nhh.no](mailto:phd@nhh.no) with the following attachments:

- ✓ Application for evaluation
- ✓ Co-authorship declarations

**The Department:** The department should as soon as possible notify the PhD Office of upcoming submissions. If a particular date for the public defence is planned, the PhD Office should be contacted as soon as possible in order to verify whether this is a feasible date.

**The PhD Office:** Once the thesis is submitted, the PhD Office notifies the Office of Communications and Marketing with the necessary information (the name of the candidate, tentative defence date, thesis title).

#### Section 6-2 Submission and application for evaluation

*It is the responsibility of the principal supervisor to notify the department and Vice Rector for Research that submission is imminent so that the necessary preparations can be initiated.*

*The application for evaluation of the thesis cannot be submitted until the training component has been approved.*

*The following must be enclosed with the application*

- the thesis, in an approved format and in accordance with the applicable provisions at NHH, and in the form and number of copies decided by NHH*
- documentation of required permits, cf. Section 2-2*
- declarations of co-authorship, if required pursuant to Section 5-7*
- a declaration stating whether the PhD work is being submitted for evaluation for the first or second time*
- a declaration stating that the PhD work has not been submitted for evaluation at another institution.*

### □ POSSIBILITIES OF WITHDRAWAL OR CHANGE (Section 6-4)

**The Candidate:** Once the thesis has been submitted, it cannot be withdrawn before the evaluation committee has reached their conclusion. Normally the thesis cannot be modified in any way. However, the candidate may apply to correct formal errors cf. Section 6-4. In this case, the candidate will need to contact the PhD Office.

#### Section 6-4 Withdrawal and reworking

*Once submitted, a work cannot be withdrawn until a final decision has been made as to whether it is worthy of a public defence for a PhD degree.*

*The PhD candidate may apply for permission to correct formal errors in the thesis after submission. A complete list of the errors (errata) that the candidate wants to correct must be enclosed with the application. An application for correction of formal errors must be submitted no later than four weeks before the deadline for submission of the committee's recommendation, and the candidate may only apply once.*

## □ APPOINTMENT OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE (Section 6-5)

**The Department:** Together with the supervisor, the department proposes an expert evaluation committee for the evaluation for the doctoral degree in accordance with the requirements of the PhD Regulations. Normally the internal member is suggested as chair of the committee. The proposed composition of the evaluation committee should normally be ready by the time the thesis is submitted. The Administration Manager of the department sends the proposal to the PhD Office ([phd@nhh.no](mailto:phd@nhh.no)).

**The PhD Office:** The PhD Office notifies the candidate of the proposal as well as his/her right to appeal against the composition of the evaluation committee within one week after the committee's composition was made known to him/her. The office forwards the proposal and any comments from the candidate to the Vice Rector for Research who then appoints the evaluation committee. The PhD Office formally notifies the committee members of their appointment by sending the thesis for evaluation (with copy to the department, the supervisor, the PhD candidate and the Vice Rector).

**The Candidate:** The candidate is entitled to appeal against the composition of the evaluation committee within one week after the committee's composition was made known to the candidate.

#### Section 6-5 Appointment of the evaluation committee

*The evaluation committee will assess the thesis, the trial lecture and the public defence of the thesis. The composition of the committee shall normally be as follows:*

- the committee shall consist of at least three members*
- both genders shall be represented*
- at least one of the committee members shall not be affiliated to NHH*
- at least one of the committee members shall not hold a principal position at a Norwegian institution*
- all members of the committee shall hold doctoral degrees or an equivalent qualification*
- the majority of the committee shall consist of external members*
- supervisors and others who have made significant contributions to the thesis may not be appointed to or chair the evaluation committee*
- the impartiality rules set out in the Public Administration Act Section 6 apply to the committee members. Special grounds must be given if the above criteria are to be departed from.*

*The department in question submits a proposal for the composition of the committee, including who should chair it. This proposal should normally be ready by the time the thesis is submitted.*

*After the Vice Rector for Research has approved the application for evaluation of the thesis, he or she appoints the evaluation committee and the chair of the committee in accordance with the proposal from the candidate's department. If necessary, the Vice Rector for Research may appoint a replacement member to the evaluation committee.*

*The candidate shall be informed of the composition of the evaluation committee and is entitled to appeal against it within one week after the committee's composition was made known to the candidate.*

## □ FINDING A TENTATIVE DATE FOR THE DEFENCE

**The Chair of the Committee:** The chair of the committee confers with the committee members concerning possible dates for the defence and notifies the department.

**The Department:** The department checks whether the suggested dates are possible for the candidate and contacts the PhD Office to agree upon the tentative date for the defence.

**The PhD Office:** The PhD Office notifies the evaluation committee and the department of the tentative date for the defence agreed upon. The PhD Office books the rooms for the defence (usually Jebsen Centre or Karl Borch Auditorium), and places a reservation for the Jebsen centre to the doctoral dinner to Ellinor Ryssevik at the Rector's Office.<sup>1</sup>

## □ EVALUATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (Section 7-2)

**The Evaluation Committee:** The evaluation committee writes an evaluation report on the submitted thesis. See for an example set-up, as well as Sections 5-7 and 5-8 for information on the thesis requirements. The report first comments upon the contributions and shortcomings of each paper of the thesis. The evaluation report then concludes evaluating the overall thesis, stating the reasons for choosing one of three alternatives: 1) the thesis is worthy of a public defence; 2) the thesis needs minor revisions before a final recommendation can be made; 3) neither of the first two alternatives being applicable, the evaluation committee finds that the work is not worthy of a public defence.

Unless otherwise specified, the evaluation committee has a maximum of three months to write and submit an evaluation report of the thesis. However, if the committee has agreed upon an earlier tentative date of defence, the recommendation has to be submitted not later than five weeks before the planned date of public defence (see the timeline above).

The recommendation must be signed by all members of the evaluation committee and sent to the PhD Office [phd@nhh.no](mailto:phd@nhh.no) within the given time limit.

**The PhD Office:** The evaluation committee's recommendation is forwarded to the candidate, informing the candidate of his/her right to submit comments. The department, supervisor(s) and the Vice Rector receive a copy of this letter.

**The Candidate:** The candidate is entitled to submit written comments to the committee's recommendation. These should be sent as soon as possible and in any case not later than ten (10) working days from the time the candidate has received the report. In most cases, the candidate chooses not to give any comments. If so, the PhD Office should be notified as soon as possible.

**The Vice Rector for Research:** When the candidate has informed the PhD Office about whether he/she has any comments on the recommendation, the office forwards the report and any comments to the Vice Rector for Research for approval. The candidate and department will be notified in writing of the Vice Rector for Research's decision.

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<sup>1</sup> During the renovation period, the NHH representation room "Stupet" will be replaced by the Kristian Jebsen Centre.

### Section 7-2 The evaluation committee's recommendation

*The evaluation committee submits a recommendation on whether the work is worthy of a public defence for the PhD degree. Grounds shall be given for the recommendation and any dissenting opinions.*

*The evaluation committee can recommend one of the following alternatives:*

- 1. The committee finds the thesis worthy of a public defence.*
- 2. The committee may recommend that the Vice Rector for Research grant permission for minor revisions before making its final recommendation. The committee must provide a specific written overview stating what the candidate needs to rework.*
- 3. If the committee finds that fundamental changes as regards theory, hypothesis, material or methods are required for the work to be recommended as worthy of a public defence, the committee must reject the thesis.*

*The evaluation committee's recommendation shall normally be ready no later than three months after the committee received the thesis, unless the Vice Rector for Research decides otherwise. If the evaluation committee permits revision of the thesis, the new deadline runs from the date when the thesis is re-submitted.*

*The evaluation committee's recommendation is sent to the Vice Rector for Research, who presents it to the PhD candidate and the management of the department that the candidate has been affiliated to. The candidate will be given a deadline of ten working days to submit written comments on the recommendation. If the candidate does not wish to submit comments, the Vice Rector for Research shall be notified of this in writing as soon as possible. Any comments from the PhD candidate shall be sent to the Vice Rector for Research.*

## PREPARATIONS WHEN WORTHY OF DEFENCE<sup>2</sup>

### □ THE THESIS WILL BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (Section 9-3)

**The Candidate:** After the thesis has been accepted for defence, the candidate has to write an abstract in English (300 words) and Norwegian (200 words) for use in a press release. This abstract has to be sent to the Office of Communications and Marketing [kommunikasjon@nhh.no](mailto:kommunikasjon@nhh.no) no later than 16 working days before the date of the public defence. The Communications and Marketing Office will contact the candidate.

**The PhD Office:** The PhD Office orders printed copies of the thesis, and makes it publicly available two weeks before the public defence. A few copies will also be distributed to the department. The thesis will be available in the auditorium at the time of the trial lecture and public defence.

#### Section 9-1 Publication of the thesis (abstract of section)

*The thesis shall be publicly available no later than two weeks before the date of the public defence. The thesis is made available in the form in which it was submitted for evaluation, with any reworking based on the committee's preliminary comments included, cf. Section 8-2.*

*The PhD candidate must submit an abstract of the thesis in English and Norwegian no later than two weeks before the date of the public defence. If the thesis is written in a language other than English or Norwegian, the abstract must also be submitted in the language of the thesis. The abstract will be made public in the same way as the thesis itself.*

### □ TRIAL LECTURE: TOPIC AND PREPARATION (Section 9-3)

**The Candidate:** The trial lecture is a 45 minutes' presentation on a prescribed topic and constitutes an independent part of the evaluation process. The objective of the trial lecture is to assess if/whether/how the candidate is able to acquire and convey academic knowledge beyond the topic of the thesis, and furthermore, to present this in a lecture setting. The candidate receives the topic for the trial lecture ten working days before the lecture is to take place. It is important to prepare a lecture that adequately answers the challenges put forth by the topic. Normally the candidate uses power point slides for his/her presentation. The lecture should neither be longer, nor shorter than the allocated 45 minutes. Questions and comments from the committee or the audience do normally not occur during the trial lecture.

**The Evaluation Committee:** The evaluation committee sends the selected topic to the PhD Office no later than 16 days before the public defence date. The purpose of the trial lecture, and thus of the selected topic, is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge beyond the thesis topic, as well as to test the candidate's ability to communicate this knowledge in a lecture. The topic of the trial lecture should not have a direct connection to the specific topic of the thesis, but can of course be related to the topic or methods used in the thesis.

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<sup>2</sup> **What happens if the candidate is required to revise his/her thesis?** If the committee requires a reworking of the submitted thesis before their final recommendation, the candidate will receive a deadline for resubmitting the thesis, normally not longer than three months. The Vice Rector appoints a new evaluation committee, where at least one member from the original committee is reappointed. See Section 8-2 for further details.

**What happens if the committee rejects his/her thesis?** If the committee does not find the thesis worthy of a public defence, the candidate may rework the thesis and resubmit at the earliest six months after the Vice Rector's decision. The final deadline for resubmission is normally two years. See Section 8-1 for further details.

### Section 9-3 Trial lecture

*If the thesis is found worthy of a public defence for the PhD degree, cf. Sections 7-3 and 7-4, the PhD candidate must give a trial lecture. The title of the trial lecture will be announced to the PhD candidate ten working days before the lecture.*

*The trial lecture is an independent part of the doctoral degree examination and must be held on a specified topic. The purpose of the trial lecture is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge beyond the thesis topic and his/her ability to communicate this knowledge in a lecture. The topic of the trial lecture shall not have a direct connection to the specific topic of the thesis.*

*The trial lecture will normally take place in connection with the public defence of the thesis, and the evaluation committee sets the topic for the trial lecture and assesses the lecture. If the trial lecture is not held in connection with the public defence, the Vice Rector for Research can appoint a separate committee to set the topic for the trial lecture. In such cases, at least one member of the evaluation committee must be appointed to the trial lecture committee.*

*The trial lecture shall take place in the language in which the thesis is written, unless the Vice Rector for Research consents to another language being used.*

*The evaluation committee decides whether or not the candidate has passed the trial lecture. Grounds must be given if it is recommended that the trial lecture be failed.*

*Candidates must have passed their trial lecture before the public defence of the thesis can take place.*

## THE DOCTORAL EXAMINATION

### □ THE CHAIR OF THE DOCTORAL EXAMINATION

The doctoral examination (i.e. the trial lecture and public defence) will be chaired by the Vice Rector for Research or a person authorised by the Vice Rector.

**The PhD Office:** The PhD Office contacts the department and the Vice Rector to make an agreement as to who will be chairing the public defence.

### □ THE TRIAL LECTURE (Section 9-3)

**The Chair:** At the start of the trial lecture the chair shortly introduces the candidate, the evaluation committee and the title of the lecture. At the end of the lecture, the chair announces the time of the public defence given that the trial lecture is approved.

**The Candidate:** The candidate should meet up at the auditorium for the trial lecture a quarter of an hour before it starts, to check the equipment and initiate the power point slides. After a short presentation by the chair, the candidate delivers his/her trial lecture. The candidate should finish within 45 minutes (including the short introduction by the chair of the public defence).

**The Evaluation Committee:** All members of the evaluation committee must be present during the trial lecture and public defence. In special cases, Skype is also possible. Committee members do not ask questions during the trial lecture. There is a break after the trial lecture, in which the committee decides upon whether the trial lecture can be approved. The committee communicates their decision to the chair of the doctoral examination. The lecture must be approved before the public defence can take place.

## □ THE PUBLIC DEFENCE (Section 9-4)

**The Chair:** The chair of the doctoral examination starts the public defence with a brief account of the submission and evaluation of the thesis, and the approval of the trial lecture. The candidate is invited to give a maximum twenty minute uninterrupted presentation of her/his thesis, mainly presenting a brief account of the purpose, methods and results of the scientific study.

After the presentation, the chair announces that if any person present wishes to oppose *ex auditorio*, they must notify the chair within the time limit set by the chair.

Following this, the evaluation committee starts their discussion with the PhD candidate. The public defence takes the form of a discussion of the thesis between the members of the evaluation committee and the candidate. There is no formal time limit for this discussion and it will be concluded when the committee is done.

After any comments *ex auditorio*, the defence chair concludes the public defence.

### Section 9-4 Public defence of the thesis (disputation)

*The public defence of the thesis shall take place after the trial lecture has been held and approved, and normally within two months after the Vice Rector for Research has found the thesis to be worthy of a public defence.*

*The time and place of the public defence must be announced at least ten working days in advance.*

*The same committee that assessed the thesis shall also assess its public defence. The public defence of the thesis shall take place in the language in which the thesis is written, unless the Vice Rector for Research consents to another language being used.*

*The public defence will be chaired by the Vice Rector for Research or a person authorised by him/her. The public defence takes the form of a discussion of the thesis between the members of the evaluation committee and the doctoral candidate. The defence chair will give a brief account of the submission and evaluation of the thesis and of the trial lecture. The doctoral candidate then explains the purpose and results of the scientific study. The defence chair decides the order and division of tasks in consultation with the evaluation committee. Any other persons present who wish to oppose *ex auditorio* must notify the defence chair at the public defence by the time set by him/her. They will be given the opportunity to comment *ex auditorio* after the evaluation committee has concluded its discussion. The defence chair concludes the public defence.*

*As soon as possible and no later than two weeks after the public defence, the evaluation committee will submit a report to the Vice Rector for Research in which it describes its evaluation of the thesis, the trial lecture and the public defence of the thesis. The report must contain a conclusion as to whether the examinations as a whole are approved or not approved.*

## □ CONFERMENT AND DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE

**The Evaluation Committee:** As soon as possible, and no later than two weeks after the public defence, the evaluation committee submits their final evaluation report to the Vice Rector for Research via the PhD Office ([phd@nhh.no](mailto:phd@nhh.no)). The final evaluation report builds upon the first evaluation report, including their assessment of the trial lecture and public defence of the thesis, and offers their overall conclusion whether the candidate is worthy of the Philosophiae Doctor degree.

**Vice Rector:** The Vice Rector for Research will award the PhD candidate the degree of Philosophiae Doctor when the doctoral examination has been successfully completed and the Vice Rector has approved the evaluation committee's final evaluation report.

The candidate will be presented with the diploma and certificate at the Graduation Ceremony at NHH in June. The candidate will receive an invitation by email to this ceremony.

## SOME PRACTICALITIES

### ❑ Accomodation and travelling to Bergen – The evaluation committee

The department will contact the members of the evaluation committee beforehand to assist the committee in booking accommodation, and in other practical questions.

### ❑ Preparation of the Auditorium

The PhD Office books the auditorium in which the doctoral examination is to take place and brings the printed copies of the thesis to the Auditorium.

The department orders flowers to the Auditorium as well as water for the candidate and the committee.

### ❑ Lunch for the Evaluation Committee

The department organises lunch for the committee in the break between the trial lecture and the public defence.

### ❑ Dress code trial lecture and public defence

The trial lecture and public defence is a formal and ceremonious event, and normally the PhD candidate and the evaluation committee follow a semi-formal dress code.

### ❑ The Doctoral Dinner

In the evening of the public defence, the PhD candidate may use the top floor at the Jebsen Center as location for the doctoral dinner (due to renovation, the representation room “Stupet” will not be available). To do so, the candidate must send an application to the Rectorate ([Ellinor.ryssevik@nhh.no](mailto:Ellinor.ryssevik@nhh.no)) indicating the date of the defence, the time schedule for the dinner and the approximate number of guests. Normally the PhD candidate invites the supervisors and the evaluation committee, in addition to family and friends. The dress code is normally semi-formal.

NHH normally supports this dinner with the amount of NOK 10 000 provided receipts of expenses. Expenses to a doctoral dinner may also be tax-deductible. For more information, please consult “[Deduction for PhD expenses](#)” on the website of the Norwegian Tax Administration. Information in both English and Norwegian.