

Guidelines -- "Seminar of chosen topic" @ Dept. of Chemistry

Seminar over a topic of the candidate's own choosing may be included in the formal training part of the examination for the PhD degree. The formal requirements for approval of a seminar of chosen topic are identical to those for the trial lecture as described in UiB regulations and also in faculty regulations. Summarized in the regulations for the MN faculty, the candidate is to demonstrate an ability to communicate research-based knowledge and insight.

The seminar of chosen topic is held in English.

The present guidelines address

- What is a suitable topic
- Expectations to the trial lecture
- A formal and detailed procedure of how to conduct the seminar and its evaluation
- Criteria of evaluation
- What happens in the case of a failed seminar

1. What is a suitable topic

The candidate chooses a topic subject to approval from the academic chair of doctoral training. The seminar is rewarded by only 1 ECTS in the formal training part, corresponding to ½ week of fulltime work, and the candidate is therefore encouraged to choose a topic that she/he has gained insight to for other reasons, usually as a background for the thesis project. It is acceptable to include a limited number of examples from own research where this applies. However, the topic should be suitable and made available for a general audience of scientific and technical staff as well as master- and PhD-students at the Department of Chemistry.

2. Expectations to the seminar

A seminar on chosen topic at the Department of Chemistry is expected to be at a high level both in terms of the scientific contents and the way the topic is presented. We should feel comfortable with inviting national and international guests to attend the seminar, and we should be happy to see the department represented by the candidate giving this talk also externally. In short, the quality of the seminar should be at a level that is acceptable for a newly educated researcher from a chemistry department of good standing.

3. Procedure for seminar on chosen topic

The formal procedure of how the seminar is organized and evaluated at the Department of Chemistry is specified on the next page.

4. Evaluation of the seminar of chosen topic

The seminar is evaluated both on contents and presentation, with possible conclusions Passed and Fail. Evaluation criteria and directions for documenting the considerations of the committee are embedded in the designated form to be used for reporting the conclusion from the evaluation. The form is available at the end of this document.

5. Action in the case of a failed seminar

The seminar on chosen topic is evaluated on a Pass/Fail grading. If a candidate receives an evaluation of **Fail** in her/his first attempt, she/he may choose to give a new seminar. The new seminar must be given on a new topic.

Procedure for seminar on a chosen topic – for the PhD degree

1. The evaluation committee consists of two members.
2. The candidate welcomes the audience to the seminar and points out the formal role it holds as part of the formal training for the PhD degree.
3. The seminar lecture has duration of 45 minutes. Up to 5 minutes of this time may be used as a question session.
4. After the lecture has finished, the committee withdraws. No preliminary conclusion is to be offered on the evaluation of the seminar.
5. The evaluation committee assesses the seminar according to the criteria on the designated form.
 - a. If the committee reaches a conclusion of “Pass”, only brief comments are required on each of the items in the evaluation form.
 - b. If, after an initial discussion, the committee finds “Fail” to be a possible conclusion, a rather detailed written assessment of the items in the evaluation form is warranted. The overall assessment should aim to give transparency to the final conclusion.
 - c. The committee should aim to reach a unanimous conclusion. Giving the candidate the benefit of doubt, a conclusion of Fail requires a unanimous committee.
6. The completed evaluation form should be returned to the department without undue delay, for informing the candidate on the evaluation.

Evaluation of seminar on chosen topic – for the PhD degree

(to be completed and submitted by the evaluation committee after the seminar has been held)

PhD candidate:
Title of seminar:
Date:

The committee should comment briefly on the performance on the following criteria before making their conclusion, guided by the general expectations that the seminar should be at a level acceptable for a newly educated researcher from a chemistry department of good standing.

1. Choice of material

[The presentation should be faithful to the given topic. It should include sufficient background to be accessible to the average chemistry major. The presentation should reflect the present status of knowledge on the topic. The amount of material should be suitable for the scheduled duration.]

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2. Structure and organization of the lecture

[The presentation should be logically structured and with suitable organization of the information. It should contain a conclusion or summary that ties back to the aims of the seminar. Sources should be properly cited.]

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3. Comprehension and scientific maturity

[The candidate should place the given topic in a larger context, linking it to contemporary issues where natural. The candidate should demonstrate overview of the subject.]

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4. Presentation

[Visual aids should be legible and the figures clear and useful. The candidate should avoid jargon and excessive use of abbreviations. The pace should be suitable. The candidate should finish on time.]

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Additional comments / Overall assessment

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In conclusion, the seminar over chosen topic is evaluated to: Pass Fail

Signature of the members of the committee

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