

# GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PHD) THESES AT THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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## MANDATE OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

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- The committee shall assess whether the thesis meets the requirements stipulated in the *Regulations for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD)* at the University of Bergen (UiB) (hereinafter referred to as the regulations). (See the section on level requirements below.)
- The assessment committee shall provide a reasoned recommendation as to whether the work is worthy of being defended for the PhD degree. Any dissent or individual statements shall be included in the recommendation and must be reasoned.
- The committee shall submit its recommendation within a deadline agreed upon with the department. Normally, this deadline is set within a period of three months after the committee has received the thesis for assessment.
- The assessment committee may request to review the candidate's source material and supplementary or clarifying information (§ 11-3 of the regulations).
- Based on the assessment committee's recommendation, the faculty itself decides on whether a PhD thesis is worthy of defense.
- Upon approval of the thesis, the assessment committee shall propose the topic for the trial lecture.

## FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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- The recommendation shall provide an unambiguous conclusion as to whether the thesis is deemed worthy of defense or should be rejected.
- The recommendation shall provide a description of the nature and scope of the thesis. The quality of the various parts of the thesis shall be assessed.
- The recommendation's extent should usually be 4-6 pages.
- The recommendation shall be written in a Scandinavian language or English.
- In the event of a dissent within the committee, both the minority and majority must justify their positions. (Refer also to the separate | on dissents below.)
- If the thesis has been submitted for a second time, or after being resubmitted following recommendations for minor revisions from the committee, this should be mentioned at the outset.

## ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

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- The committee chair is responsible for ensuring that the committee's work and recommendation comply with the regulations.
- The committee chair is responsible for organizing the committee's work, including ensuring that the work commences promptly and that the timeframe for the committee's work is adhered to.
- The committee chair shall act as a liaison between the committee and the department.
- The committee chair shall as early as possibly confirm the tentative date for the trial lecture and the public defense with the department.
- If the thesis is approved, the committee chair shall submit the committee's proposed topic for the trial lecture to the department for approval. This must be done no later than three (3) weeks before the planned public defense.

## LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

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The assessment committee shall evaluate the thesis according to the aims and level requirements stipulated in the regulations for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD) at the University of Bergen. In § 2-1. Description of Content and Aims of the degree Dr.Philos., the following is stated:

### § 2-1. OBJECTIVES FOR THE PHD EDUCATION

The PhD education is intended to qualify for research of an international standard, and for other work in society that require high levels of academic insight and analytical thinking, in accordance with recognised academic practice and standards on research ethics.

The PhD education shall provide the candidate with knowledge, skills and competence in line with the described learning outcome for the relevant PhD programme and in line with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.

**The regulations further specify the following requirements for the academic level of the thesis:**

### § 10-1. THESIS REQUIREMENTS

*The thesis should be an independent scientific work of international standard and at a high academic level with regards to problem formulation, conceptual precision, methodology, research ethics, theoretical and empirical basis, documentation, and presentation. The thesis should be able to generate new academic knowledge and have a level of scholarship indicating that the research could be published as part of the scientific literature in the field.*

The dissertation shall further be assessed based on the learning outcomes description in the Ph.D. program at the Faculty of Humanities (cf. § 2-1 of the regulation).

The thesis can be submitted as a monograph or a collection of articles (article-based thesis), cf. § 10-1 of the regulations). There is no requirement that the articles in an article-based thesis be published prior to submission, but they should be publishable as part of the field's scientific literature. The quality of the articles should be considered by the committee even if the articles have been peer-reviewed and published prior to the submission deadline.

Regarding the cover (kappe) for article-based thesis:

- The cover is a unifying presentation that provides a more detailed account of the entirety of the thesis.
- The cover should place the works in the thesis within a broader research context.
- The cover should be authored solely by the candidate.

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## REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE SCOPE OF THE THESIS

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The absence of requirements for an approved educational component shall be compensated for by the thesis work being somewhat more extensive than what is required in the organized doctoral program at the faculty.

In the organized doctoral programs, the thesis should have a scope equivalent to 2.5 years of research for the candidate. The assessment of the scope should consider the standards in the relevant academic tradition.

Guidelines regarding the scope of the thesis:

- A monograph thesis should normally have a minimum scope of 200 pages (standard pages, i.e. 2 000 characters including spaces), not including the preface, table of contents, and bibliography.
- An article-based thesis should consist of a cover and normally at least three articles.
- The cover should normally have a scope of 60-80 pages (standard pages, i.e. 2 000 characters including spaces per page).

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## CO-AUTHORSHIP

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Collaborative work is accepted for assessment provided that the candidate's contribution represents an independent effort that can be identified to the extent necessary for the assessment (cf. § 10-2 of the regulations). Collaborative work can be included in both monograph thesis and article-based thesis.

If the thesis includes collaborative work, declarations from the co-author(s) should describe the candidate's and each co-author's contributions to each individual work. The committee shall assess whether the candidate's contribution to the relevant work(s) can be identified and is sufficient.

Normally, at least half of the works in an article-based thesis should have the candidate as the first author.

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## MINOR REVISION

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§ 11-4 of the regulations allows the committee to recommend minor revisions of the thesis before the recommendation is finalized. In such cases, the committee shall provide a specific overview in writing of what the candidate must revise. The committee shall only recommend minor revisions in cases

where the changes are not profound. The committee's overview of what needs to be revised must consider that the changes can be made within a deadline not exceeding three months. Minor revisions should not be recommended if they only concern minor ambiguities in the thesis which can be clarified within the framework of the public defence.

**A recommendation for minor revisions should not be understood as a conditional approval of the thesis.** When a revised version of the thesis is available, a new deadline for the committee's final recommendation shall be set, not exceeding two months.

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### UPON A NEW ASSESSMENT (RE-SUBMISSION)

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A doctoral thesis that the faculty itself has not deemed worthy of defence can be assessed in a new version. A new assessment can only take place once (cf. § 13 of the regulations).

Upon re-submission, the assessment committee shall make its assessment on an independent basis, but still has access to the previous assessment.