

Overview of PhD procedure (PhD Regulations 2015 and 2017)

Please find below an overview of the steps in the formal procedure leading to the public defence of a PhD dissertation.

1. PhD candidate

The PhD candidate consults with the most appropriate professor for the chosen field of research regarding the proposed PhD research and the willingness of this professor to act as supervisor. This professor then informs the PhD candidate in writing and as soon as possible whether or not he is prepared to act as supervisor and sends a copy to the dean of the relevant faculty.

The PhD candidate checks whether he/she meets the legal prior education requirement. If not, he/she can ask the dean for an exemption from this requirement (see ‘Admission to the PhD programme’).

As soon as the PhD candidate has received the professor’s confirmation of agreement, he/she requests the dean to appoint the relevant professor as supervisor. The PhD candidate uses form/appendix 2 for this purpose, and includes a certified copy of the diploma that demonstrates that he/she meets the legal prior education requirement, or a request for an exemption from this requirement, including a number of other documents (see “Admission to the PhD programme”). Form/appendix 1 should be used to submit this request.

2. Dean

Once the dean has received a request to appoint a professor as supervisor, he/she ascertains whether the PhD candidate meets the prior education requirement. If this is the case, or if the PhD candidate has been exempted from this requirement by the dean, the dean appoints the professor who has expressed his willingness to act as supervisor, and notifies the professor, the PhD candidate and the Doctorate Board of this in writing. The PhD candidate is also accepted into the Graduate School of the relevant faculty. Admission takes place in line with the procedure established by the Graduate School (form/appendix 1a). At the request of the PhD candidate, the dean can also appoint a second professor, from the same or a different faculty, as supervisor. In highly exceptional cases, the Doctorate Board can also appoint a third supervisor, on the recommendation of the dean. If no second supervisor is appointed, the dean appoints a co-supervisor, in order to ensure that the PhD candidate has at least two supervisors.

If the PhD candidate does not meet the legal prior education requirement and has not been granted exemption from this requirement, but has submitted a request for exemption to the dean, the dean first has to reach a decision regarding this request.

3. Supervisor

Within three months of being appointed as such, and in consultation with the PhD candidate, the supervisor draws up a training and supervision plan for the PhD candidate and sends a

copy of it to the dean. This plan includes regular consultations between supervisor and PhD candidate and a written report of these consultations.

If two (or even three) supervisors have been appointed, the supervisors, having discussed this with the PhD candidate, determine how to distribute the various tasks among themselves. This division of tasks is set out in writing, and a copy is sent to the PhD candidate and to the dean.

The supervisor, having discussed this with the PhD candidate, can ask the dean to appoint a co-supervisor. The supervisor ascertains whether the proposed co-supervisor is prepared to take on this responsibility. This request can be submitted at any stage of the PhD research.

4. PhD candidate

The PhD candidate submits the manuscript of the dissertation either in its entirety or in sections to the supervisor in order to ascertain whether it meets the requirements applicable for a dissertation to qualify as a basis for obtaining a doctoral degree.

The PhD candidate implements the changes to the manuscript agreed with the supervisor and submits the entire manuscript to the supervisor for approval.

5. Supervisor

If the supervisor is of the opinion that the manuscript meets the relevant requirements (including requirements regarding scientific integrity) and may serve as a proof of competence in independently conducting research, he/she approves the manuscript. If one or more supervisors or co-supervisors have been appointed, the supervisor only approves the manuscript after having been informed of their assessment.

Within six weeks of the date on which the manuscript was submitted to the supervisor, the supervisor informs the PhD candidate using form/appendix 3 of his decision whether or not to approve the manuscript as a dissertation. He/she sends a copy of this form to the dean and to the Doctorate Board.

6. PhD candidate

As soon as possible after the manuscript has been approved, the PhD candidate submits to the supervisor a minimum of four propositions that relate to the topic of the dissertation, a minimum of four scientific propositions that relate to the field of inquiry of the dissertation, and no more than four propositions on one or more topics chosen by the PhD candidate.

7. Supervisor

As soon as the supervisor has approved the manuscript as a dissertation, he/she requests the dean to appoint a Doctorate Committee using form/appendix 5a. He/she includes with this request a proposal regarding the composition of the committee, having first ascertained that the parties involved are willing to be members of this committee. Supervisors and co-supervisors are excluded from membership of the Doctorate Committee.

The supervisor attaches to his request a sufficient number of copies of the dissertation to be distributed among the members of the committee.

The supervisor also informs the PhD candidate whether in his opinion the propositions submitted meet the relevant criteria. If this is the case, the supervisor sends the text of the propositions and his assessment of them to the dean.

8. Dean

No later than three weeks after receiving the decision of the supervisor to approve the manuscript as a dissertation, the dean appoints the Doctorate Committee at the request of the supervisor and nominates one of its members, a professor at the faculty where the defence will take place, as secretary (form/appendix 5b).

9. Doctorate Committee

Within six weeks of receiving the dissertation, the Doctorate Committee informs the secretary in writing whether the dissertation provides sufficient proof of the PhD candidate's competence in independently conducting research for him/her to be allowed to defend it. If necessary, the Doctorate Committee may convene to discuss the matter. The supervisor and co-supervisor attend this meeting.

10. Secretary

The secretary of the Doctorate Committee sees that the PhD candidate is informed immediately in writing, using form/appendix 5c, of the committee's decision whether or not to allow the PhD candidate to defend the dissertation. A copy of this form is also sent to the supervisor, the dean and the Doctorate Board.

11. Dean

As soon as possible after receiving a copy of the decision of the Doctorate Committee that the PhD candidate may be allowed to defend the dissertation, the dean ascertains whether the PhD candidate can be granted admission to the defence. He/she immediately informs the PhD candidate, the supervisor, the beadle and the Doctorate Board of the findings, using form/appendix 6.

A slightly different procedure applies for admission to the defence for a dissertation in the Arts, namely that the dean grants the PhD candidate admission to the defence prior to the decision of the Doctorate Committee but subject to this decision (see article 22.2 of the PhD regulations). The dean informs the PhD candidate of this provisional admission using form/appendix 3a, and forwards a copy of the form to the supervisor and the Doctorate Board.

12. PhD candidate

The PhD candidate registers for the defence of his dissertation with the beadle using form/appendix 7.

The PhD candidate is only allowed to duplicate the dissertation once the Doctorate Committee has decided that he/she is allowed to defend it and the dean has ascertained that he/she can be granted admission to the defence (see under 11).

The PhD candidate is only allowed to duplicate the front and back matter of the dissertation and the propositions once the dean has given permission to do so. The formatting of the title page and the back cover of the dissertation must be approved by the beadle.

13. Beadle

The beadle sets the date and time of the defence in consultation with the supervisor, the PhD candidate and the dean. This date and time are not set until the dean has established that the PhD candidate may be granted admission to the defence (see under 11).

The wishes of the PhD candidate regarding the date and time are taken into account as far as possible.

The beadle informs the PhD candidate in good time that the title page and the back cover of the dissertation have been approved.

14. PhD candidate

No later than three weeks before the date of the defence, the PhD candidate delivers ten copies of the dissertation including separate sheets with the propositions to the beadle's office, a number of copies - to be determined by the dean - to the dean, and as many copies as required to the Opposition Committee. He/she also delivers five copies of the dissertation to the University Library. In addition, he/she submits the dissertation to the University Library in an electronic format to be determined by the librarian, so that the dissertation can be included in the institutional repository (IR) of the University.

No later than three weeks before the date of the defence, the PhD candidate provides the University with a licence for non-exclusive publication of the dissertation in digital form, if necessary under a temporary embargo. In order to do so, the PhD candidate is required to sign the standard licence contract (form/appendix 4) established by the Executive Board.

15. Supervisor

The supervisor submits a written proposal to the dean regarding the composition of the Opposition Committee, using form/appendix 8a. Neither the supervisor nor the co-supervisor may be a member of the Opposition Committee. The Rector and the dean (or appointed substitutes) act respectively as chairman and secretary.

16. Dean

The dean determines the composition of the Opposition Committee and informs the PhD candidate, the supervisor and the beadle of this in writing, using form/appendix 8b.

17. PhD candidate

The PhD candidate defends the dissertation in public in the presence of the Opposition Committee. Neither the supervisor nor the co-supervisor may be a member of the Opposition Committee, but they may take part in the opposition debate.

18. Supervisor

Following the oral defence, the Opposition Committee retires for deliberation. The supervisor and/or co-supervisor attend(s) this deliberation and put(s) forward a proposal regarding the award of the doctoral degree, but may not vote in the subsequent deliberation regarding this decision. If the Opposition Committee decides to award the doctoral degree, the supervisor is authorised by the Rector to award this degree.

19. 'Cum laude' regulation

The rules relating to the award of a doctorate 'cum laude' are set out in article 29 of the PhD regulation. The procedure is described in the 'Cum laude' regulation (appendix 9).