

PUBLIC DEFENCE OF A DOCTORAL THESIS AT THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Adopted by the Faculty Board of Humanities 2013-12-10, revised 2014-05-06, 2014-09-02 and 2015-03-03.

1. General information

1.1 Basic regulations for public defence and doctoral degrees can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance (HF 6:33–35) and in the regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University (2014-06-12, Reg. no. SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

1.2 A doctoral thesis should be defended orally at a public defence seminar.¹

1.3 The time and place of the defence seminar are determined by the director of Student Services. The time and place should be determined before the application is submitted.²

1.4 The language of the thesis and the defence is regulated in the general syllabus for each field of study, and in the regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University.³

2. Assessment at the department level

2.1 When work on the thesis is nearing completion, the department should arrange a review of the thesis. The review should lead to a recommendation for or against scheduling a public defence.

¹ Högskoleförordning 1993:100 (HF).

² Regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University 2014-06-12, Reg. no. SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14.

³ Regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University.

2.2 The department should have written routines for the review procedure, adopted by the department board. The routines should also specify which function or body has the power to decide whether to recommend for or against scheduling a public defence.

2.3 A written account of the review should be sent to the doctoral student, the principal supervisor, and the Faculty Office. The report should include which routines were followed, the decision and a brief justification, who took part in the review, and which function or body made the decision.

2.4 Following the review, the doctoral student should receive clear, written information on what revision and additions are necessary before the public defence.

3. Proposal to the Faculty Board of Humanities

3.1 The chair of the public defence, the faculty examiner, and the examining committee are appointed by the Faculty Board at the request of the head of department. The proposal should be submitted to the registrar using the Faculty's electronic form. The doctoral student should be notified of the content of the proposal before it is sent to the Faculty Board. It should be clear from the proposal that:⁴

- there is no conflict of interest between the doctoral student and the faculty examiner or the members of the examining committee;
- there is no conflict of interest between the supervisors and the faculty examiner or the members of the examining committee.

3.2 If the proposal deviates from the Faculty's guidelines regarding the chair, faculty examiner, and examining committee (see section 4-6), this should be justified in the designated place on the Faculty's form.

3.3 The proposal should be submitted to the Faculty Board early enough that the public defence can take place at the intended time even if the Faculty Board finds it necessary to refer the proposal back to the department. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted to the Board at least six weeks before the intended date of the public defence.

4. Chair

⁴ Information on how conflict-of-interest rules should be applied is available in the rulebook (su.se/regelboken).



4.1 The public defence should be led by a chair.⁵ The chair has a coordinating function before and during the defence seminar.

4.2 The chair should be a professor at the doctoral student's department who, typically, has not been a supervisor to the doctoral student. The chair may not be a member of the examining committee.

4.3 Student Services will provide the chair with a minutes form. The chair is responsible for keeping minutes of the defence seminar and the examining committee's decision, and for promptly submitting the minutes to the registrar.

5. Faculty examiner

5.1 The faculty examiner may not be from the same department as the doctoral student.⁶

5.2 The opponent must hold a PhD or equivalent qualifications.

5.3 The faculty examiner should not be an emeritus.

5.4 The faculty examiner is entitled to attend the examining committee's meeting and take part in the deliberations, but not in the decisions.⁷

6. Composition of the examining committee

6.1 According to *Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University*, the examining committee should comprise three or five members. It is Faculty practice for the examining committee to comprise three members. In cases where a doctoral student chooses to defend his/her thesis in spite of advice against it, the examining committee should comprise five members. In such cases, no more than one member may be from the same department as the doctoral student.

6.2 Both genders should, unless there are special circumstances, be represented on the examining committee. All members should be associate professors or professors (or equivalent). Exceptions can, under special circumstances, be made for no more than one (1) of the members. Such circumstances should be specified in the proposal. If a proposed member is an emeritus, the proposal must be justified. The examining committee should not comprise two members from the same department at one university/college.

⁵ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



6.3 The supervisors may not be part of the examining committee.⁸ Other than that, the usual conflict-of-interest rules apply.⁹

6.4 Additional regulations:

- At least one member should not be affiliated with Stockholm University.¹⁰
- One member should work at the Humanities & Social Sciences Academic Area at Stockholm university.¹¹
- No more than one member may be from the doctoral student's department.¹²

6.5 An alternate member should be appointed. The alternate member should be able to stand in for any of the regular members.¹³ Out of the four members, two should work outside Stockholm University, two should work at the Humanities & Social Sciences Academic Area at Stockholm University, and no more than one may be from the doctoral student's department.

7. Assessment and grading

7.1 The doctoral thesis should be assessed using the grade Pass or Fail. Both the content and the public defence of the thesis should be taken into account when determining the grade.¹⁴ All members of the examining committee should review and assess the entire thesis, not only the part that is considered relevant to the individual member's field of expertise.

7.2 The examining committee should appoint one member as chair of the meeting. The faculty examiner and one supervisor are entitled to attend the meeting with the examining committee and take part in the deliberations – unless a member has requested a separate deliberation – but not to take part in the decisions.

7.3 The examining committee can only make decisions when all members are present. The opinion agreed on by a majority of the members should serve as the committee's decision.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Information on how conflict of interest rules should be applied is available in the rulebook (su.se/regelboken).

¹⁰ HF.

¹¹ Regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Split decisions and decisions to reject the thesis should always be justified.¹⁵ A member may request separate deliberation. If such a request is made, only members of the examining committee may be present during the deliberation.

7.4 If a member of the examining committee is planning to recommend that the thesis be rejected, he/she must notify the chair immediately – no later than one week before the public defence. Together with the chair and the principal supervisor, the doctoral student will then decide whether to withdraw the thesis.

7.5 The chair is responsible for checking with the examining committee no later than one week before the defence seminar that there are no obstacles for the thesis' acceptance. If a member of the examining committee is planning to recommend that the thesis be rejected, the doctoral student should decide, together with the chair and the principal supervisor, whether to withdraw the thesis.

8. Production and distribution of the thesis

8.1 *Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University* contains regulations for how the thesis should be printed and distributed, and how the public defence should be announced.

The Faculty Board of Humanities has decided that at least 32 physical copies of the doctoral thesis should be printed before the public defence and delivered as follows:

- 4 copies to Student Services
- at least 25 copies to the department that the doctoral student is affiliated with
- 3 copies to the University Library

When a doctoral student chooses to publish the full text of the thesis electronically in the University's publication database, at least 7 physical copies of the thesis should be printed and delivered as follows:

- 4 copies to Student Services
- 3 copies to the University Library

In addition to the above, the department will decide if a doctoral thesis should be printed in a larger edition.

8.2 For more detailed information, please refer to Student Services' web pages about the defence procedure.

¹⁵ Ibid.

9. Compensation for costs

9.1 The Faculty will pay a grant to the department after the minutes from the public defence have been submitted to the Humanities Faculty Office. A prerequisite for compensation to be paid is that the department has recommended that the thesis be submitted and that it is accepted. A doctoral student who chooses to defend his/her thesis in spite of written advice against it has to personally cover the printing costs if the thesis is rejected.

9.2 The department will cover the cost of producing and duplicating the thesis in accordance with the Faculty Board's decision regarding the minimum number of copies, the *Legal Deposit Act*, and the head of department's decision regarding additional copies for the department.

9.3 The faculty examiner will receive an honorarium and compensation for any travel and accommodation expenses. Members of the examining committee will not receive honoraria, but only compensation for any travel and accommodation expenses. The department is responsible for paying the faculty examiner and, where appropriate, the members of the examining committee.

10. Additional information

10.1 If the appointed faculty examiner is unable to attend, a new examiner should be appointed if time permits. If the faculty examiner is prevented from attending at the last minute, the defence may be conducted as some kind of video conference, or by appointing one of the regular members of the examining committee as faculty examiner, in which case the alternate member will join the examining committee. If none of these options are possible, the defence will be postponed until a later date.¹⁶

10.2 If a member of the examining committee is not present at the scheduled time of the defence, the alternate member will join the committee instead.

¹⁶ Regulations for doctoral studies at Stockholm University.