

# **Regulations concerning the philosophiae doctor degree (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)**

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Passed by the Board of NTNU on 7 December 2005 in accordance with the Act of 1 April 2005 no. 15 relating to Universities and University Colleges § 3-3 and 3-9 no. 7.

The following clauses in the Degree Regulations at NTNU, passed by the Board on 7 December 2005 apply to doctoral education: §§ 2, 10-12, 23 no. 3, 24-30, 32-40, 42 and 44.

## **§ 1 Scope and extent of the regulations**

These regulations apply to education at doctoral level that leads to the philosophiae doctor degree (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

The regulations stipulate the rules for admission, doctoral work, and completion of the PhD degree at NTNU.

## **§ 2. Objectives of the PhD education programme**

The PhD education programme has the objective of training candidates to be independent researchers who can work at an international level in cooperation with Norwegian and international research groups.

The PhD education programme has the objective of meeting the current and future requirements for research, development, supervision and dissemination within universities, other public institutions, private-sector institutions, enterprises and organizations.

## **§ 3. PhD Programmes**

The PhD education programme requires that the candidates take the PhD Programmes that are offered by the faculties or scientific/interdisciplinary networks.

The Rector is to approve each PhD Programme. When the Rector approves a PhD Programme, he/she is to stipulate which faculty has responsibility for the administration of that PhD Programme. A PhD Programme can be established in cooperation with Norwegian or international research institutions.

All PhD Programmes are to be presented in a course catalogue for the whole of NTNU. The faculty charged with the administration of the PhD Programme is to approve the curriculum and the description of courses.

## **§ 4 Content and organization of the PhD education programme**

The PhD education programme mainly comprises active research work under supervision.

The PhD education programme includes:

- completion of an independent piece of research (PhD project) in active cooperation with other researchers
- writing a PhD thesis based on the PhD project
- approved organized academic training, cf. § 7.3
- participation in active research groups in Norway and internationally
- scientific and academic dissemination, including the publication of the PhD project work

## **§ 5. Admission**

### **§ 5.1 Applicant's formal qualifications**

The applicant to a PhD Programme must have a master's degree or equivalent education that is approved by the Faculty as the basis for admission for that applicant to the PhD Programme.

The applicant must have a strong academic record and have a weighed average grade in the past two years (equivalent to 120 credits) of master's or equivalent education with a grade of B or higher, in accordance with NTNU's grading system.

Applicants who are unable to meet these criteria may only be admitted if they can document that they are suitable candidates for education leading to a PhD degree.

The Faculty has the right to request that applicants take specified courses and/or pass specified tests prior to admission.

Applicants are to be assessed on the basis of their grades, other relevant qualifications and their submitted PhD plans, cf. § 5.2.

Approval of the plan for organized academic training, cf. § 7.3, is to be based on the requirements of the PhD Programme that has been applied for.

Separate admission criteria will apply for admission to organized research training institutions and PhD Programmes where applicants must be admitted to professional courses for researchers.

### **§ 5.2 Application – PhD plan**

Applications for admission must be made on the application form. The PhD plan that includes the project description is to be completed in cooperation with the main supervisor and is to specify which issues are being considered, the scientific approach, theory and method. The description of the research project is to normally be between 5 and 10 pages. When applying for admission to a

PhD Programme, this project description can be a summarized version that is to be completed in cooperation with the main supervisor, but the detailed description of the research project has to be prepared within six months of being admitted to the Programme.

The application for admission is to include a PhD plan that covers the following:

- plan for organized academic training
- project description
- proposed supervisor(s)
- work schedule
- funding plan
- estimate of required scientific and material resources
- scientific dissemination plan
- plan for meeting residency requirements
- explanation of how the applicant can participate with active research groups in Norway and internationally

If the applicant plans to submit his/her thesis in another language than that approved in § 7.4, paragraph six, this must be applied for in writing when applying for admission to the PhD Programme.

### **§ 5.3 Admission procedure**

The application for admission should be addressed to the Faculty but sent to the Department. The Department evaluates the application, checks whether the admission criteria are met, and whether the project is feasible within the prescribed time, given the resources that are available. The Department then makes a recommendation to the Faculty. Each application is to be decided by the Faculty. The time required to process such a complete application should not exceed 6 weeks.

If the applicant's project indicates that interdisciplinary cooperation will be required, the Faculty is to ask for assessments from the relevant research groups prior to admission.

The Faculty is to make a ranking of qualified applicants in cases where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available on a PhD Programme.

### **§ 6. Agreement**

A written agreement is to be entered into to formalize admission to a PhD Programme at NTNU. The parties to the agreement are the PhD candidate, the Department, the supervisor(s), and the Faculty that admits the candidate. External bodies may also be parties to this agreement.

The agreement is to stipulate and control the mutual rights and responsibilities of the parties.

Any changes in the conditions in the agreement are to be submitted to the Faculty for approval.

## **§ 7. Taking the PhD education programme**

### **§ 7.1 Prescribed duration**

The PhD education programme has a prescribed duration of three years of full-time study (180 credits). The period of study can be extended due to leaves of absence and agreed part-time study that have been approved by the Faculty. Any work duties come in addition.

The maximum time of study for the PhD degree is 6 years from the time of admission to the date the thesis is submitted. Any leaves of absence, lengthy periods of illness, work duties and approved part-time study are not to be counted in this 6-year period. If the maximum time of study is exceeded, the candidate is not permitted to defend his/her thesis. The Faculty is to decide whether or not the maximum time of study has been exceeded.

### **§ 7.2 Residency requirement**

The candidate must be at NTNU for at least one year of his/her PhD education programme. The main supervisor has the task of ensuring that this residency requirement is met. A reduction in this residency requirement is only possible in special cases where both the main supervisor and the Department recommend it. Here the proposed solution must show how the academic supervision is to be carried out and also how the student can make a contribution to academic and research activities at NTNU.

### **§ 7.3 Organized academic training**

The organized academic training in the PhD education programme is to provide scientific and methodological training.

The Faculty is to ensure that all PhD candidates are offered high quality scientific training. If the Faculty charged with the administration of the PhD Programme does not arrange all the organized academic training in the PhD education programme, this Faculty is to ensure that the candidate has equivalent conditions at another unit/faculty or at another institution that offers a recognized PhD degree. In courses where there is no teaching available, an individual study syllabus can be approved as part of the organized academic training.

The organized academic training is to cover a total of 30 credits, equivalent to six months of full-time study. At least 20 credits are to be taken from courses on the curriculum in the PhD course catalogue. The PhD candidate is to take the required examinations in accordance with the plan for organized academic training, with the deadlines set by the Rector.

The passing grade in such courses is B or higher in accordance with NTNU's grading system.

The Faculty is empowered to exempt candidates from the organized academic training in the PhD education programme if equivalent requirements have been met at another unit/faculty or at another institution that offers a recognized PhD degree.

An application to make changes in the approved training plan is to be decided by the Faculty. The Department is to make a recommendation about such changes. This application is to be prepared together with the main supervisor.

## **§ 7.4 Thesis**

The thesis is to be independent scientific work at an international standard.

The PhD thesis is to be high quality scientific and academic work in terms of the formulation of the issues it addresses, its precise use of terminology, method, theory and empirical foundation, documentation and means of presentation. The thesis is to help develop new scientific knowledge and be of a standard that is appropriate for publication as part of the literature in its discipline.

Work that has already been approved in relation with a graduate degree cannot be submitted as part of the thesis unless the previous work is a minor element in a connected series.

A number of smaller publications may be approved as parts of the thesis when they constitute a totality. Here it is necessary that there is a text that summarizes the work and puts it into an overall perspective.

A thesis cannot be submitted by more than one candidate. If the work contains joint publications involving the supervisor(s) or other authors, it is assumed that the candidate's work is an independent contribution that can be identified. The preface to the thesis is to make it evident how the candidate's work can be identified.

Even though a piece of work may have been revised, it is not permitted to submit a thesis or part of a thesis for a doctoral degree that has already been approved or rejected at another Norwegian university or a university abroad.

The thesis is expected to be written in English or Norwegian. Application to write the thesis in another language is to have been made by the candidate at the time of applying for admission to a PhD Programme, see § 5.2, third paragraph.

The thesis is to be part of the public domain.

The name of the supervisor(s) is to be stated in the preface to the thesis.

## **§ 8 Supervision**

The Faculty is to appoint the supervisor(s). When more than one supervisor is appointed, one of them is to have the main disciplinary responsibility for the candidate's work. The main supervisor is to be responsible to the supervision. The supervisor is to be a professor or associate professor at NTNU. The supervisor(s) must hold doctoral degrees or equivalent qualifications in the discipline.

The PhD candidate and the supervisor(s) are to be in regular contact. The responsibilities of the candidate and the supervisor(s) in carrying out the supervision are stipulated in the agreement relating to the candidate's PhD education programme, cf. § 6.

## **§ 9 Reporting**

During the period covered by the agreement, the PhD candidate is to deliver an annual report in writing to the Faculty that compares progress to date with the PhD plan. The supervisor(s) must also deliver an annual report with a copy to the Department. These reports are to be written on the forms that are available for this purpose

## **§ 10 Submission of the thesis**

The application to assess the thesis must be submitted to the Faculty. Proof of completion of the organized academic training must also be enclosed. The application is also to enclose the thesis and the number of copies specified by the Faculty. If the thesis is accepted for public defence, additional copies must be submitted as decided by the Faculty. The thesis must be delivered in an approved standard format. The thesis is to be accompanied by an abstract in an approved standard format which is to be in Norwegian and English. This can be used as a press release. The thesis must be made available to the public at least four weeks before the public defence.

Once submitted, a thesis cannot be withdrawn until a final decision has been reached as to whether it can be approved for defence of the PhD degree. After submission, the doctoral candidate can only make corrections of a formal character, and an errata sheet detailing all such corrections must be submitted four weeks before the date of the public defence.

The public defence is to be held within four months of delivering the thesis.

## **§ 11 Appointment of an adjudication committee**

The Faculty is to appoint an adjudication committee to assess the thesis and its public defence. The committee is to consist of at least three members, based on the proposals submitted by relevant academic staff/research group. The proposal is to show how the committee jointly covers the disciplinary area of the thesis. This proposal is to be completed at the time the thesis is delivered.

At least two members of the committee should be from outside NTNU. The committee should have at least one international member unless special disciplinary circumstances prevent this. Both sexes are to be represented. The members of the adjudication committee must hold a doctoral degree or equivalent academic qualifications.

The Faculty is to appoint an administrator for the committee. The supervisors for the doctoral candidate cannot hold this position.

If a thesis is submitted in a revised version for a new assessment, at least one member from the previous adjudication committee is to be part of the new committee.

The provisions applicable to legal competence in the Norwegian Public Administration Act, §§ 6 and following sections, apply to the members of the committee, cf. § 10 of the same Act. An appointed supervisor cannot be a member of the committee, but may be requested to attend meetings of the committee to give an account of the supervision and the candidate's work on the thesis.

Normally it will not take more than four weeks before the doctoral candidate is informed about the composition of the committee. The candidate can comment on its composition in writing within a week of this. If the candidate has no comments, the Faculty is to be notified immediately.

In connection with the appointment of an adjudication committee, the Faculty is to set a deadline for the committee report. This is normally not to be more than 3 months after the thesis was sent to the committee.

## **§ 12. Committee report and follow up**

The committee must submit a joint detailed report within a deadline determined by the Faculty. This report is to recommend whether or not the thesis is worthy of being publicly defended for the PhD degree. The report may be accompanied by individual statements. Details must be given of any dissent among the members of the committee. The committee may require that the doctoral candidate submits source material as well as supplementary and clarifying information.

The report from the adjudication committee, complete with any individual statements and/or statements of dissent, must be addressed to the Faculty and forwarded to the doctoral candidate as soon as possible. The candidate may submit written comments to the Faculty no later than 14 days after the receipt of the report. If the candidate has no comments, the Faculty is to be notified immediately.

The comments from the doctoral candidate must be considered by the adjudication committee before the Faculty reaches a formal decision in the matter.

The Faculty cannot oppose a unanimous committee report.

If there is dissent in the committee, the Faculty can follow the majority ruling from the committee. If the Faculty feels that there is reason to doubt whether the thesis can be accepted or not, the Faculty is to appoint two new experts who are to submit independent reports. If both these follow the ruling of the majority in the original committee, this ruling is to be followed. If not, the Faculty is to decide the matter.

## **§ 13 Revision of thesis for new assessment**

If a thesis cannot be accepted for public defence, a recommendation can be made that it is to be submitted in a revised form for a new assessment if the adjudication committee feels that this would produce a satisfactory result within a period of about six months.

A thesis that was not accepted at an earlier assessment may be assessed in revised form either as a single piece of work or as one of a number of pieces of work at the earliest six months from when the Faculty decided to reject the thesis. It is only possible to make a new assessment once.

## **§ 14 Trial lecture and public defence**

A trial lecture on a prescribed subject must be given preferably on the same day as the public defence. The trial lecture is to be assessed by the adjudication committee and is to be found satisfactory or not. The prescribed subject of the trial lecture is determined by the adjudication committee and the candidate must receive notification of the subject two weeks prior to the lecture.

If the committee assesses the trial lecture to be satisfactory, the doctoral candidate is permitted to hold a public defence of his or her thesis.

The trial lecture and the public defence must be conducted in the language decided by the administrator of the committee.

The public defence is to be open to the public. There are normally two opponents. The opponents are members of the adjudication committee, and are appointed by the Faculty.

The proceedings in the public defence are chaired by the Dean or by the person to whom this task has been delegated. The appointed supervisor cannot chair the public defence. The chairperson is to give a brief account of the submitted thesis and the trial lecture as well as the assessments these received. Then the doctoral candidate is to review the purpose and results of the academic work in the thesis. The first opponent introduces the discussion which is concluded by the second opponent. Other persons present who wish to participate in the discussion must give notice of this to the Dean/chairperson before the expiry of the determined time limit that is announced at the start of the proceedings.

After the defence, the adjudication committee submits a report to the Faculty, in which it gives an account of its evaluation of the trial lecture, the thesis and the public defence of the thesis. The adjudication committee is to assess the academic standard of the thesis in relation to the international standard of equivalent doctoral work. The report must conclude whether the results are satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

If the public defence is found to be unsatisfactory, a new public defence may be held no earlier than four months after the original defence.

### **§ 15 Conferment of the PhD degree**

The PhD degree is to be conferred on the basis of:

- approved completion of the organized academic training
- approved trial lecture on a prescribed subject
- approved academic thesis and satisfactory public defence of the thesis

The Faculty will decide whether or not it can confer the philosophiae doctor degree (PhD) on the candidate on the basis of the report from the adjudication committee.



## **§ 16 Certificate and diploma**

Certificates are issued on an on-going basis. The certificate is to contain information about the title of the thesis, the subject of the trial lecture, the subjects in the organized academic training, and the supervisor(s). The certificate is to be signed by the Dean. The diploma supplement is to be part of the certificate.

A doctoral degree diploma is issued by NTNU. This is to be signed by the Rector of NTNU and the Dean of the Faculty.

## **§ 17 Appeals**

### **§ 17.1 Appeals relating to admission or loss of the right to study**

Appeals following the rejection of an application for admission are to be made in accordance with §§ 28 and following sections of the Norwegian Public Administration Act. The same applies to loss of the right to study. In such cases, a detailed appeal must be sent to the Faculty concerned. If the Faculty finds that there is no reason why the decision is to be reversed, the appeal must be forwarded to the University Appeals Committee for a final ruling.

In case of an appeal about the assessment or procedural matters, the applicable law is the Act relating to Universities and Colleges of 1 April 2005, §§ 5-2 and 5-3.

### **§ 17.2 Appeals relating to refusal to assess the thesis, or that the thesis, trial lecture, or public defence cannot be approved**

In case of appeals relating to the refusal to assess the thesis, or that the thesis, trial lecture, or public defence cannot be approved, the applicable law is §§ 28 and following sections of the Norwegian Public Administration Act. A detailed account of the grounds for such an appeal must be sent to the Faculty. The Faculty can change or reverse the decision if it finds grounds to substantiate the appeal. If the Faculty does not reverse its decision, the appeal can be forwarded to the Board of NTNU for a ruling. The body handling the appeal is to thoroughly investigate all aspects.

Should the Faculty or the body dealing with the appeal see fit, it may appoint individuals or a committee to undertake an evaluation of the decision made and the criteria underlying it, they can also decide whether a new or supplementary expert evaluation should be undertaken.

## **§ 18 Implementation**

These regulations come into force immediately.