

FOR ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Information on Being a PhD Assessment Committee Member, Faculty of Science and Technology, Aarhus University

Appointing the Committee

Immediately following the submission of a PhD thesis to Graduate School of Science and Technology/GSST, an expert assessment committee consisting of three experts is appointed, based on a recommendation from the respective PhD programme. The members shall be recognised experts within the relevant scientific area. Two of the members shall be external, and at least one member shall be from outside Denmark. The third member must in general be a member of the respective GSST programme committee, and he/she acts as chairman of the assessment committee. The PhD student's supervisors shall not be members of the committee - the main supervisor, however, assists the committee (without the right to vote).

The Role of the Committee

As specified in the Danish Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme at the Universities, the role of an assessment committee is

1. to make a recommendation in the form of a Recommendation to the university as to whether the PhD thesis fulfils the requirements for the award of the PhD degree, and
2. to take part in a public defence and subsequently to make a Final Recommendation as to whether the PhD degree should be awarded.

The PhD thesis must document the research conducted by the PhD student alone or in collaboration with co-workers. The PhD thesis may include a number of manuscripts in different stages of completion that are related to the topic of the PhD project. For all such manuscripts, statements will be provided by co-workers indicating the proportional contributions by the PhD student (co-author statements). If the thesis is composed mainly of manuscripts, it must include a summary chapter at the beginning summarising the overall contributions.

In case of disagreement amongst the committee members, simple majority prevails.

The Recommendation

The Recommendation (re. 1 above) must be sent to GSST no later than two weeks before the defence and at the latest two months after the submission of the thesis.

The Recommendation has three possible outcomes:

- a. Favourable, in which case the defence of the thesis shall commence.
- b. Not favourable, but recommending that the thesis is resubmitted with specific recommendations on required improvements, and with a specific timeframe for resubmission (at least three months). A resubmitted thesis will be assessed by the same

- committee.
- c. Not favourable and not recommending resubmission.

The Recommendation must be reasoned, and in its final conclusion clearly state one of the above three outcomes, that is "whether the PhD thesis fulfils the requirements for the award of the PhD degree", and in case of (b) give detailed specifications with respect to the resubmission.

Furthermore, the Recommendation should contain all relevant formalities on the thesis (author, title, supervisors, language, number of pages, number of publications, etc. as well as the names and affiliations of assessment committee members). The Recommendation should normally not exceed five pages.

Currently the Recommendation is submitted on paper approved by the committee members. Approval can take place as stated below:

- A. Either all three members of the assessment committee must sign the Recommendation (original signatures), or
- B. the chairman of the assessment committee must attach e-mail correspondence with the other members of the assessment committee clearly stating what they agree to along with his/her own opinion stated in the e-mail, or
- C. the chairman of the assessment committee must provide scanned signatures of all three members of the assessment committee.

If option B or C is chosen, please note that all three members of the assessment committee must sign the Recommendation (original signatures) on the day of the defence.

In case of a favourable outcome, the chair of the assessment committee suggests to GSST a time and place for the defence, and he/she is chairing the actual defence, which consists of a presentation by the PhD student followed by questions from the assessment committee.

The Final Recommendation

The Final Recommendation (re. 2 above) takes the form of a signed standard one-page document. On the day of the defence, this document must be signed by all three members of the assessment and afterwards returned to GSST. Please note that if the assessment committee wishes to add any comments on the PhD defence, these must be written on the Final Recommendation.

Under normal circumstances the PhD defence is concluded by a Final Recommendation that the PhD be awarded.

In case of a negative outcome, the assessment committee submits a detailed assessment in writing to GSST within two weeks following the PhD defence.

Honorarium and Travel Reimbursement

External members of PhD assessment committees will receive an honorarium and a refund for travel expenses in connection with the PhD defence.

For further information see our website:

<http://phd.au.dk/gradschools/scienceandtechnology/assessmentcommittees/>