

Instructions for the external reviewer at the public defence of a doctoral thesis

The external reviewer must have a doctoral degree with the equivalent of the qualifications required for appointment to a readership/associate professorship, and expert knowledge within the subject area of the thesis. The external reviewer must not be actively involved in research at Umeå University. The external reviewer must not be biased in relation to the student, supervisor(s) or project.

External reviewer's task

The external reviewer is entitled to get access to the thesis no later than 3 weeks prior to the public defence. He/she has primary responsibility for a deep, critical, scientific review of the thesis. This review is to include all parts of the thesis without exception. During the public defence of the thesis, the external reviewer's task is to carry on an in-depth discussion with the author of the thesis on its various parts. In this discussion, the external reviewer is to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis. Theoretical and practical aspects are to be highlighted in this discussion, as well as how the results of the thesis work can be placed in a broader scientific and medical context. It is important that the author of the thesis is given the opportunity to demonstrate his/her knowledge and how he/she has met the national qualitative targets.

- The person assuming the task of external reviewer must be satisfied that there are no obstacles to this task.
- If the external reviewer finds that an obstacle has arisen, he/she must immediately contact the supervisor, who will then submit a new proposal for an external reviewer in writing to the faculty secretariat. The Dean then appoints a new external reviewer.
- Should the external reviewer fail to appear at the beginning of the public defence, the chairperson is entitled to appoint a member of the examining committee as the external reviewer (not the external member). The chairperson then appoints a suitable replacement on the examining committee from among the audience's representatives from academia.

Public defence of doctoral thesis

The public defence of a doctoral thesis has no real time limit, but is usually conducted as follows:

- 1) The chair welcomes the audience and introduces the author of the thesis, the external reviewer and the members of the examining committee, and briefly describes what will happen.
- 2) The author of the thesis is given the opportunity to inform the audience of any corrections made to the thesis.
- 3) The external reviewer provides a brief overview of the scientific area for about 15 minutes.
- 4) The author of the thesis presents his/her thesis for approximately 20-30 minutes.

- 5) The external reviewer and the author of the thesis then carry on a detailed scientific debate on the various parts of the thesis, which generally takes approximately 60-90 minutes.
- 6) The examining committee discusses the thesis with its author for about 20-30 minutes.
- 7) Before the defence of the thesis ends, the audience is offered the opportunity to put questions to the author of the thesis.

Examining committee meeting

The examining committee convenes after the public defence of the thesis. The external reviewer and supervisor are entitled to attend and participate in the deliberations of the examining committee, but not to participate in its decision.

National qualitative targets

Doctoral degree:

Knowledge and understanding

Objective: Demonstrate broad knowledge within, and a systematic understanding of, the area of research.

Objective: Demonstrate in-depth and up-to-date specialist knowledge within a defined part of the area of research.

Objective: Show familiarity with scientific methodology in general.

Objective: Show particular familiarity with the methods used in the specific area of research.

Competence and skills

Objective: Demonstrate the ability to conduct scientific analysis and synthesis as well as independent critical review and evaluation of novel and complex phenomena, questions and situations.

Objective: Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate questions and to plan and use adequate methods to conduct research and carry out other qualified tasks critically, independently and creatively, with scientific exactitude and within specified time limits; and to examine and assess his/her own work.

Objective: By means of a thesis, demonstrate the ability to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge through his/her own research

Objective: Demonstrate the ability to present and discuss research and research results in national and international contexts, both orally and in writing, and with authority, in dialogue with the scientific community and the community in general.

Objective: Demonstrate the ability to identify needs for further knowledge.

Objective: Demonstrate the prerequisites for making a contribution to the development of society within research and education and in other qualified professional contexts; and for supporting the learning of others.



Judgement and approach

Objective: Show intellectual independence and scientific probity and the ability to make ethical judgements in matters of research.

Objective: Show a deep awareness of the possibilities and limitations of science and its role in society and human responsibility for how it is used.