

Guidelines for Trial Lectures and the Public Defence for the Dr.Philos. Degree¹

Regulations

The guidelines are prepared in accordance with the provisions set out in the following documents:

- *Regulations for the degree of doctor philosophiae doctor (Dr.Philos.) at the University of Bergen*

Trial Lectures

Purpose and Structure

The candidate shall conduct two trial lectures after submitting the dissertation, but prior to the public defence. The trial lectures constitute independent components of the assessment for the Dr.Philos. degree and are evaluated separately as either passed or not passed.

Both trial lectures shall be passed before the defence can take place.

The purpose of the trial lectures is to assess the candidate's ability to acquire and communicate knowledge beyond the scope of the dissertation in a lecture format.

One of the trial lectures shall be on a self-chosen topic. The candidate shall submit the title of this lecture at least one month prior to scheduled date. The proposed topic must be approved by the faculty.

The second trial lecture shall be on a given topic that is related to, but distinct from, the dissertation. This lecture should have a duration of 45 minutes. The topic is determined by the faculty based on a proposal from the same committee that evaluated the dissertation. The relevant department or centre is responsible for announcing the topic to the candidate ten working days before the lecture is to be held.

¹ Unauthorized translation of original text in Norwegian

Both trial lectures are generally held at the University of Bergen. The faculty determines the permissible language(s) for both the trial lectures and the public defence. The trial lectures are typically scheduled for the day preceding the public defence. Generally, the trial lectures do not include a question or discussion session.

Leadership and Committee

The trial lectures are chaired by the dean or a designated representative (acting dean).

The trial lectures are evaluated by an assessment committee consisting of at least three members. The committee should typically be composed as follows:

- a. All members must hold a doctoral degree or possess equivalent academic qualifications.
- b. The committee should include members of different genders to ensure diversity

Typically, the same committee that evaluated the dissertation also evaluates the trial lectures. In the event of an absence, the department or centre shall propose a substitute member. Substitute members are appointed by the faculty. If the absence occurs shortly before the lecture, the dean or acting dean appoints a substitute based on a proposal.

Recommendation and Decision

The committee submits a recommendation to the faculty regarding the approval of the trial lectures. If a lecture is not recommended for approval, the recommendation must be substantiated. The faculty makes the final decision based on the committee's recommendation. Typically, the committee submits its recommendation to the acting dean, who grants approval by proxy.

Rejection

If one or both trial lectures are not approved, new lectures must be held. These must be on new topics and take place no later than three months after the faculty's decision. Each category of trial lecture may only be repeated once. The new lectures should preferably be evaluated by the same committee, unless otherwise decided by the faculty.

Public Defence

Purpose and Structure

The Dr.Philos. candidate shall publicly defend the scientific work presented in the dissertation. The public defence shall consist of a structured academic dialogue between the opponents and the candidate, addressing problem formulations, methodological and theoretical foundations, documentation, and presentation. The defence also serves to make scientific knowledge and methods publicly available for critical reflection and discussion.

The candidate shall be afforded the opportunity to respond to academic critique, elaborate on academic choices, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation. Attendees shall be given the opportunity to comment from the audience (ex auditorio).

The candidate begins with a brief introduction (15 minutes) outlining the objectives, background, and main findings of the doctoral project. The first opponent presents an overall perspective and sets the framework for the defence, typically addressing the principal and overarching aspects of the dissertation. This part of the defence normally lasts approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

Following the first opponent's presentation, there is a break of up to 20 minutes. Any ex auditorio opponents should contact the presiding chair during this break. After the break, the floor is given to ex auditorio opponents, followed by the second opponent's presentation. This part of the defence should typically not exceed one hour.

The defence should typically be held within two months after the faculty has deemed the dissertation worthy of defence. The time and location must be announced at least ten working days in advance. The defence is normally held at the University of Bergen. The faculty determines the permissible language(s) for both the trial lectures and the public defence.

The public defence must be formally approved before the doctoral degree can be conferred.

Leadership, Committee, and Opponents

The defence is chaired by the dean or a designated representative (acting dean). The presiding chair opens the defence and outlines its formal procedures.

There should typically be two opponents, and more than one gender should be represented. The opponents are members of the assessment committee and are appointed by the faculty. The committee chair is responsible for coordinating the roles and responsibilities of the first and second opponents. In special cases, opponents who were not members of the committee may be appointed.

In the event of an absence, the department or centre shall propose a replacement, normally another committee member. Substitute members are appointed by the faculty. If the absence occurs shortly before the defence, the dean or acting dean appoints a substitute based on a proposal.

Recommendation and Decision

The assessment committee submits a recommendation to the faculty regarding the approval of the defence. If the defence is not recommended for approval, the recommendation must be substantiated. The faculty makes the final decision based on the committee's recommendation. Typically, the committee submits its recommendation to the acting dean, who grants approval by proxy.

Rejection

If the defence is not approved, only one additional defence may be held. The new defence must take place no later than three months after the faculty's decision. The new defence should preferably be evaluated by the same committee.

Note that rejection of the defence does not entitle the candidate to revise the dissertation. The dissertation must be formally approved prior to the defence.