

Programme plan - PhD at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen

Established by the University Board of the University of Bergen on 11 April 2019, pursuant to the Regulation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the University of Bergen approved by the University Board on 29 November 2018.

1. Programme name, objectives, scope, and qualification

1.1. Overall

1.1.1. Name

- PhD programme at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen

1.1.2. Objectives

- The objective of the PhD education is to qualify candidates for humanities research of an internationally recognised standard and for other work in society with high demands for scientific insight and analytical thinking, in accordance with recognised standards for ethical research practice.

1.1.3. Scope

- The PhD education at the Faculty of Humanities has a stipulated length of three (3) years of full-time study and includes an educational training component (course work) of 30 credits. The PhD education is considered concluded upon submission.

1.1.4. Qualification

- Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)

1.2. Description of learning outcomes

1.2.1. Upon completion of a doctorate, the candidate shall have achieved the following skills

- The candidate is in the forefront of knowledge within their field of research and is well versed in the field's philosophy of science and methods.

- The candidate can apply various theories, perspectives, methods and processes to research and development projects associated with their field of research.
- The candidate can contribute to the development of new knowledge, new theories, methods, interpretations, and forms of documentation within their field of research.

1.2.2. Upon completion of a doctorate, the candidate shall have achieved the following skills

- The candidate can formulate scientific lines of inquiry, as well as plan and carry out high-level (noteworthy) research and scholarly development activities.
- The candidate can handle complex academic issues and challenge established knowledge and practice in their field of research.
- The candidate can identify relevant ethical issues and carry out their research with academic integrity.
- The candidate can communicate their research and development work through recognised national and international channels.
- The candidate can participate in debates within their field of research at national and international forums.

1.2.3. Upon completion of a doctorate, the candidate has achieved the following competencies

- The candidate can plan and implement work related duties and projects within and outside their specific subject area.
- The candidate can analyse large amounts of information, explain, and understand complex contexts, and account for their own assessments.
- The candidate can help carry out challenging projects in a critical and innovative manner.

2. Admission

2.1. Admission requirements

2.1.1. Qualification

- As a general rule the applicant must have a five-year master's degree in line with the descriptions of level 7 in the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQF).

- Applicants must normally have achieved a grade of B or better on their Master's thesis. Reference is made to [the national grading system of Norwegian universities](#).
- In exceptional cases, the faculty may, following a special assessment, approve other equivalent education as a basis for admission. Such education must demonstrate learning outcomes corresponding to level 7 of the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.
- Applicants must have completed independent research work under supervision. As a general rule, this independent research work should be equivalent in scope to a 30 ECTS Master's thesis.
- Applicants must be able to use Norwegian or English as an administrative language and must have sufficient language skills to complete the compulsory training component.
- The faculty may set additional qualification requirements when announcing PhD fellowship positions

2.1.2. Project description

- The application must include a plan for the project written in accordance with the approved guidelines. The main elements of the guidelines are:
 - A clear description of the scientific project, which contains research background, main issues, theory, methodology, and ethical aspects where relevant
 - An implementation schedule with milestones outlining the educational training component and any stays abroad
 - A funding plan
- The application should state what language the applicant plans to use in their thesis
 - Norwegian, English, Swedish and Danish are always accepted
 - Languages that can be properly administrated/attended to by the basic unit (department or centre) that manages the relevant subject area are also permitted. This assessment is done by the basic unit
 - It is not possible to change the language of the thesis if less than six months remain before submission

2.1.3. Funding requirements

- Applicants without a research fellowship at the faculty of Humanities must provide a plan for the satisfactory funding of the entire doctoral programme. The plan must include, living expenses and operating expenses that relate to the research, expenses for fieldwork, scientific assistance and/or stays abroad.

- It is not possible to apply for admission on a self-funding basis.

2.1.4. Documentation requirements

- Documentation of education (copy of diploma and Diploma Supplement (DS) from a university or university college)
- A summary of the master's thesis of approx. two (2) pages
- Documentation of the academic content and level of the degree, i.e., learning outcomes presented in the Diploma Supplement or other official information from the educational institution
- If applicable, a list of relevant academic publications
- If applicable, documentation of any extraordinary requirements regarding academic and material resources
- A funding plan, and if applicable, an employment contract with an external employer
- The faculty may require documentation of satisfactory English language proficiency
- The faculty may set additional documentation requirements when announcing PhD fellowship positions

2.1.5. Basis for evaluation

- The applicant's formal qualifications: academic background (education, publications etc.), grades, within nominal length of study
- Project quality, methodological validity, innovation, and feasibility
- Environmental support and integration in an active research environment. Access to necessary infrastructure
- Any ethical considerations
- Funding

2.1.6. Residency requirement

- The faculty will, as a general rule, practice residency requirements.

2.1.7. Admission procedure

- There are no fixed application deadlines associated with admission to this programme.
- Applicants who are employed as a research fellow at the Faculty of Humanities will be assessed in connection with their appointment and do not need to submit a separate application for admission to the PhD programme.

- Other applicants must apply for admission to the PhD programme on a separate application form.
- An application is sent via the basic unit with which the applicant wants to be affiliated.
- The decision on admission is made following a recommendation from the basic unit in question, according to the programme's basis for assessment.
- From the date the PhD candidate receives notification of admission, normally, no more than one month shall elapse before an agreement on the PhD education is signed.

2.2. PhD agreement and agreement period

2.2.1. PhD agreement

- Admission to the PhD programme is formalised through a written PhD agreement signed by the candidate, the supervisor(s), the faculty, and any external party if applicable.
- The PhD agreement regulates the rights and obligations of all parties during the agreement period and ensures that the candidate participates regularly in an active and relevant research environment. The agreement must facilitate completion of the education within the agreed timeframe.

2.2.2. Agreement period

- The agreement period refers to the admission period in the programme and is normally equivalent to three (3) full-time equivalents (cf. § 5-3 of the regulations).
- The agreement period is distinct from the employment period. The employment period may exceed three years, for example due to additional time allocated for career-promoting duties (previously referred to as required duties).
- At the start of the programme, the agreement period is set to match the employment period. A four-year PhD position will thus result in a four-year agreement period in the PhD programme, with 75% academic progression.
- It is not permitted to plan for a progression that results in an agreement period exceeding six (6) years.

2.2.3. Extension

- In the case of statutory leaves of absence, the employment period is extended. In such cases, the agreement period is also extended accordingly
- Candidates not employed by the Faculty of Humanities are responsible for notifying and documenting such extensions of the employment period

- If the candidate has received an extension of the employment period due to elected positions or similar, the agreement period will normally be extended accordingly.
- The agreement period may also be extended on other grounds upon application to the faculty.
- The application must explain what has been completed and what remains of the PhD project. It must include an updated progress plan and a new proposed end date. The faculty will assess whether the project can be completed within the extension period. Confirmation from the supervisor and the academic unit regarding supervision during the extension must be provided.
- The application must be submitted before the current agreement period expires. Extensions may be granted for up to one year at a time.
- Applications for extensions beyond the employment period are handled by the academic unit.
- An extension cannot be granted unless it is confirmed that supervision and administrative support can be maintained.
- The candidate may apply to submit the thesis for evaluation even after the agreement period has expired, provided the coursework component has been fully approved.

2.2.4. Termination of the PhD agreement

The faculty may decide to terminate the PhD education if one or more of the following conditions are met:

- Significant delay in completing the coursework component
- Repeated or serious breaches by the candidate of their duty to provide information, follow-up, or reporting, including failure to submit progress reports
- Project delays that strongly indicate the candidate will not be able to complete the programme within the agreed timeframe
- Substantial changes to the PhD project that deviate from the approved project description and are not sufficiently academically justified

Termination under these rules may only be decided if the delays or changes are due to circumstances within the candidate's control.

2.2.5. Final review meeting

Approximately six months before the end of the funding period, all candidates must be offered a final review meeting by their academic unit. The purpose of the meeting is:

- to assess the candidate's progress in the programme
- to prepare and support the candidate in the final phase

- to evaluate the need and possibility for applying for an extension of the PhD agreement (beyond the funding period)

The final review meeting must be documented in a brief report, which shall be achieved.

The candidate may apply to submit the thesis for evaluation even after the agreement period has expired, provided the coursework component has been fully approved.

2.3. PhD agreement

- Admission to the PhD programme is formalised in a written agreement.
- The PhD agreement is signed by the candidate, supervisor(s), basic unit, the faculty, and an external party when applicable.
- The PhD agreement contains provisions on the parties' rights and obligations during the agreement period and is intended to secure the candidate's participation in an active research environment, and facilitates the completion of the PhD education within the agreed-upon time.
- At least one supervisor must be appointed at the time of admission.

3. Structure and content of the programme

3.1. The PhD programme consists of the following compulsory activities:

- Attend academic supervision sessions with the appointed supervisor(s).
- Report annually on his/her progress in accordance with the standardised procedure.
- Carry out a midway evaluation according to current guidelines.
- Complete an educational training component of 30 credits, including courses in the philosophy of science and ethics of a minimum of 5 credits.
- Conduct independent research that will result in a scientific thesis of an internationally recognised standard.
- Hold a trial lecture.
- Defend the thesis at a public defence.

3.1.1. Guidance framework:

- The main supervisor should normally be employed by the Faculty of Humanities.
- As a general rule, the candidate should have more than one supervisor and be offered both a main supervisor and at least one co-supervisor.

- The academic supervisor(s) must have a doctoral degree or equivalent academic competence within the subject area.
- All of the appointed supervisors should have previous experience of supervision of candidates at the master's and/or PhD level. It is desirable that at least one of the supervisors have experience with guidance at the PhD level.
- The main supervisor must be clarified at the time of admission, and if there are several supervisors, it should be made clear who the main supervisor is.
- A separate supervision agreement is written at the start of the PhD programme (part B of the PhD agreement, which governs the division of work and responsibilities between different supervisor roles. The agreement must be updated when changes occur).

3.1.2. Content of the supervision

- Supervisors and candidates are required to plan the training component and the independent research of the PhD programme jointly. The plan should be based on the requirements for achieved learning outcomes.

3.1.3. Scope of supervision

- The candidate has access to a total of 108 hours of supervision. The hours are distributed among all the appointed supervisors.
- This provides an average of 18 hours of supervision per semester, at normal progression (6 semesters).

3.1.4. Responsibilities of the supervisors and candidate within the supervisory relationship

- The main supervisor has ongoing academic and administrative responsibilities for the PhD candidate and is the candidate's primary contact.
- The duties of the supervisors and candidates are further described in part B of the PhD agreement.

3.1.5. Termination of academic supervision

- Any dispute or conflict related to the supervision should, as far as is possible, be resolved by the basic unit. The PhD candidate and the supervisor together must attempt to find a solution to the situation that has arisen.
- The PhD candidate and supervisor can at any time and independently of each other address issues concerning the doctoral programme with the basic unit's PhD

coordinator (e.g. difficulties related to supervision or progression in the doctoral programme).

- The PhD candidate and supervisor may, by agreement, ask the basic unit to appoint a new supervisor or supervisors.
- If the parties do not reach agreement on resolving the situation, the PhD candidate or supervisor may each request to be released from the supervision agreement. A request to be released from the supervision agreement must be sent to the basic unit.
- New supervisor(s) shall be appointed by the faculty at the recommendation of the basic unit.
- The main supervisor may not withdraw until a new main supervisor has been appointed.

3.2. Progress reporting

- All PhD candidates and main supervisors at UiB are required annually to carry out progress reporting, in line with applicable guidelines.
- The progress report shall be followed up by the basic unit to which the candidate is affiliated.
- Main objective: To assess the development of the project and need for adjustments.
- The candidate and main supervisor have equal responsibility for reporting.

3.3. Midway evaluation

- All PhD candidates at UiB must undergo a midway evaluation.
- Main objective: To identify issues that entail a risk that the project will be halted or delayed, as well as providing input that can increase the quality of the work.
- It is the responsibility of the basic unit to summon the candidate to a midway evaluation.
- The midway evaluation is conducted when the candidate is about halfway through the work period on their doctoral degree.
- The midway evaluation takes place at a meeting with the candidate where the basic unit's management, specialist competence and administration are represented.
- The specialist competence shall consist of at least one expert in addition to the supervisor(s).
- The administration is represented by the basic unit's PhD coordinator or equivalent.
- Prior to the meeting, the candidate and the main supervisor each submit a report describing the status of the thesis work.

- The candidate also submits a text and gives an oral presentation. The scope of the text and presentation is determined by the candidate's research group.
- Involvement of the research group in the midway evaluation should be facilitated, for example by inviting members to participate in a discussion on the submitted text and presentation.
- The midway evaluation is documented on the applicable template and followed up by the basic unit if there is any discrepancy, need for action, or other necessary measures.
- The midway evaluation replaces the progress report in the year it takes place.

3.4. Final seminar (master class)

- All PhD candidates at the faculty are offered a final seminar.
- It is the responsibility of the basic unit to carry out a final seminar for the PhD candidates who wish to do so.
- The offer is normally granted when the candidate has approx. 1/2 year of work left before the scheduled submission, or by agreement with the candidate, supervisor(s) and research coordinator.
- The final seminar can also be used as a means to promote submission for candidates who are delayed.

3.5. Thesis

- The thesis can be written as a monograph or as a collection of articles with an extended abstract ("kappa").
- The thesis must correspond to 2.5 years of full-time studies.

3.6. Training component (course work)

3.6.1. Content of the training component

- The candidate must complete a training component in scientific method, theory, theory of science, and ethics that provides depth and breadth in their own subject, while at the same time putting the subject into a wider framework. In the PhD education, the candidate must also be required to communicate scientific work to colleagues, students, and the public (cf. §2-2)
- The training component should provide training in professional communication and an introduction to research ethics, scientific theory and scientific method. The training component must, together with the research work, contribute to achieving the

expected learning outcomes in the current faculty's PhD program and in line with the national qualification framework (cf. §7-2)

- The supervisor is responsible for giving advice on the training component (cf. § 6-3). The candidate and supervisor must prepare a plan for the training component, which must be approved by the department/centre management. Any changes to the plan will be followed up in connection with progress reports and mid-term evaluation.
- The training component of the research program consists of 30 credits, of which at least 20 credits must be taken after admission. Elements to be included in the training component must not normally be older than five (5) years at the date of admission (cf. § 7-2).
- 15 credits must be taken as compulsory courses offered at the faculty.
 - Scientific theory and ethics – 10 credits
 - Literature Review and Publication – 5 ECTS
- It is possible to apply to the faculty for admission (prior approval) of external courses, to replace the compulsory subjects.
 - The application must be justified based on the candidate's project.
 - It must be documented that the learning outcome of the external subject/course is equivalent to the subject being replaced.
- The candidate-specific training component must ensure that the candidates fulfil the requirements of the PhD regulations for the training component, beyond the content already covered by the compulsory courses.
- The candidate-specific training component must therefore cover the following (cf. section 2-2 of the regulations):
 - professional method and theory that provides depth and breadth in one's own field of research
 - training in dissemination of scientific work stays abroad
- The department/centre is responsible for ensuring that the candidate-specific training component contributes to meeting the requirements of the regulations. This must be ensured both through the candidate's plan for the training component and any follow-up in progress reports and midway evaluation.
- Credit-giving activities may include:
 - PhD courses under the auspices of UiB, research schools or other accredited institutions
 - Participation with presentations at conferences and seminars
 - Instrumental courses and courses with particular relevance to the thesis work (In the case of approval of courses from a lower level, credits reduction must be considered.)

- Mediation work
- The following activities do not pay off in the training component:
 - presentation of thesis chapters at internal seminars
 - stays abroad
 - duty work
 - midway evaluation
 - final seminar (master class)

3.6.2. Documentation requirements

- All elements in the training component must be documented and approved in accordance with the applicable guidelines.
- The entire training component must be approved at least six months before the candidate can apply for submission.
- The training component is considered complete when formal approval of the overall training component is given.

4. Completion

4.1. Application for submission of doctoral work

- Application for submission of doctoral work is done on a separate form.
- The thesis must be submitted according to the UiB template applicable at the time of application.
- The thesis is to be submitted both electronically and in as many printed copies as the basic unit decides (normally 4 copies).
- Any documentation of necessary permits, such as ethical clarifications, must be enclosed.
- Co-author declarations must be enclosed when required (if the thesis consists of work to which others besides the candidate have contributed).

4.2. Guidelines for use of time

- No more than five months should normally elapse from submission to public defence.
- Normally the committee should be appointed no more than four (4) weeks after approval of the candidate's application for thesis evaluation.

- The thesis must be publicly available no later than two (2) weeks before the public defence is held.

4.3. Assessment

- The assessment committee assesses whether the thesis satisfies the formal and real requirements set out in the PhD regulations and the faculty's programme and guidelines.
- A collaborative written assessment is provided.
- In the event of dissent on the committee, both the minority and the majority must justify their position.
- The written assessment is indicative of the faculty's treatment of the thesis. If the faculty does not want to follow the majority's position, it may obtain further professional reasoning.
- The assessment should provide a clear and unequivocal conclusion on whether the academic requirements are met, so that the thesis can be defended for the PhD degree.
- The assessment should provide a description of the nature and scope of the work conducted.
- The quality of the various parts of the work must be assessed.
- The length of the assessment should normally be 4-6 pages.

4.4. Errata and correction of formal errors

- After submission, the candidate can apply for permission to correct formal errors in the version of the thesis that is to be made public. Such applications are submitted using the appropriate template and can only be submitted once.
- The candidate must account for the corrections in an errata list. After approval, the errata list is added as an insert to the thesis, which is available during the public defence.

4.5. Abstract and press release

- If the thesis is found worthy of defence, the candidate must submit an abstract of the thesis in English and an abstract in Norwegian. A press release in Norwegian should also be submitted
- The abstracts should each be 1-3 pages long and follow the published version of the thesis.
- The press release should be a popular science summary of the doctoral thesis. It should be approved by the basic unit and be ready well before the public defence.

- The basic unit is responsible for sending the press release to the Communication Department no later than two (2) weeks before the public defence takes place.

4.6. Trial lecture

- If the thesis is approved, the candidate must give a trial lecture on a given topic for 45 minutes.
- The subject of the trial lecture is to be proposed by the same committee that assessed the thesis.
- Normally, the same committee that assessed the thesis also assesses the trial lecture.
- The basic unit is responsible for announcing the subject of the trial lecture of the PhD candidate 10 working days before the lecture is to be held.
- The trial lecture is an independent part of the PhD degree and is assessed as passed or failed before the public defence.
- The trial lecture is normally held the day before the public defence.

4.7. Public defence (disputation)

- The purpose of the public defence is to test the candidate and his/her thesis against accepted academic standards.
- The chair of the committee is responsible for coordinating the division of roles between the first and second opponents.
- The chair of the public defence opens the public defence and explains the formal aspects of the public defence.
- The candidate gives a brief introduction (15 minutes) setting out the objective, starting point and main results of the PhD project.
- The first opponent is tasked with presenting the totality and setting the framework for the public defence. Normally, the first opponent addresses the overriding and fundamental aspects of the thesis. This part of the public defence normally takes about 1 1/4 hours.
- The first opponent's opposition is followed by a break of up to 20 minutes. Any ex auditorio opponents approach the chair of the public defence during this break.
- After the break, the floor is given to any ex auditorio opponents.
- The second opponent presents his/her opposition after any ex auditorio opponents. This part of the public defence should normally not exceed approx. 1 hour.
- The public defence is concluded by the chair of the public defence.

5. Quality assurance

5.1. Evaluation system for the PhD programme

- The PHD programme at the Faculty of Humanities is evaluated according to the UiB's quality assurance system for PhD education.
- The faculty's Research and PhD Education Committee (FFU) has programme responsibility for the PhD programme and follows up quality assurance of the elements at the programme level.