



This English translation of *Forskrift om graden philosophiae doctor (ph.d.) ved Nord universitet* is intended for information purposes only. The original Norwegian document is the authoritative version for all legal purposes. Should a dispute arise regarding the interpretation of provisions in the two versions, the Norwegian version shall prevail.

## **Regulations regarding the philosophiae doctor (PhD) degree at Nord University**

**Authority:** Adopted by Nord University on 16 December 2020 pursuant to sections 3-3 and 3-9 of [Act no. 15](#) of 1 April 2005 on universities and university colleges (the Universities and University Colleges Act).

### **PART I INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS**

#### **1. Scope of the Regulations**

These Regulations apply to all education culminating in the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD) at Nord University. The Regulations regulate admission to, execution and completion of doctoral education, including joint degrees and cotutelle (joint supervision) agreements.

For other provisions that regulate matters related to the PhD degrees, reference is made to the most recent version of the Norwegian Act relating to universities and university colleges, the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (NKR), the Regulations concerning terms and conditions of employment for the posts of *postdoktor* (post-doctoral fellow), *stipendiat* (PhD candidate), *vitenskapelig assistent* (research assistant) and *spesialistkandidat* (resident), the Regulations relating to degrees and protected titles, the Ministry of Education and Research's Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education, the Norwegian Agency of Quality Assurance and Education's (NOKUT) Regulations concerning supervision of the educational quality in higher education (Academic Supervision Regulations), the Norwegian Act on ethics and integrity in research, and the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, as well as the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.

#### **Section 2. Terminology**

The degree is hereinafter also referred to as *an academic PhD* or *doctoral degree*.

The terms *doctoral work* and *project* refer to the work that the candidate does during the agreed period from start-up to completion, not including the required coursework (the training component).

The term *academic thesis* or *thesis* refers to the results of the academic doctoral work (cf. section 11-1).

#### **Section 3. The objectives of doctoral education and conferral of a degree**

##### **Section 3-1. Objectives, scope and content**

The objective of the doctoral education is to qualify candidates to conduct research of a high international standard and perform other types of work requiring a high level of academic expertise and analytical thinking in accordance with good academic practice and established standards on academic and research ethics.

The doctoral education shall provide the candidate with knowledge, skills and expertise in keeping with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.

The doctoral education has a normal duration of three (3) years of full-time study and includes a training component comprising required coursework with a minimum scope of 30 credits. The faculties may decide that the training component shall comprise more than 30 credits.

The main component of the doctoral education is an independent research project or combined research and development work carried out under active academic supervision.

### **Section 3-2. Conferral of an academic PhD**

A PhD degree is conferred on the basis of:

- An approved academic thesis (cf. section 11-1)
- Approved completion of the required coursework (the training component) (cf. section 9-1)
- An approved trial lecture on an assigned topic (cf. section 18-1)
- Approved public defence of the academic thesis (disputation) (cf. section 18-2)

### **Section 4. Responsibility for the doctoral education**

The Board of Nord University has the overall responsibility for the doctoral education.

The faculties have been delegated responsibility for the implementation of the doctoral education within their respective disciplines. The faculties that manage the PhD programme are responsible for adopting the programme description and the course descriptions.

The Rector may establish supplementary guidelines for the respective PhD programmes, provided they are not in conflict with these Regulations.

The programme coordinator for the PhD programme must possess a PhD in a relevant subject area.

### **Section 5. Quality Assurance**

The doctoral education is covered by Nord University's quality assurance system. The faculties are required to quality assure their doctoral education in line with this system.

## **PART II ADMISSION**

### **Section 6. Admission**

#### **Section 6-1. Admission requirements**

For admission to the doctoral education, the applicant must normally have an academic master's degree of 120 credits or the equivalent; cf. section 3 of the Regulations concerning Requirements for Master's Degrees and the descriptions in the second cycle of the Norwegian Qualifications Framework. The applicant must normally have an average weighted grade of B or higher on their higher degree.

After special assessment, Nord University may approve other equivalent education as a basis for admission.

Private funding, such as own or family funds etc. is not normally accepted as equivalent funding for admission to organised research education (cf. section 6-2).

The faculties may set additional requirements regarding qualifications based on criteria that are publicly available and in line with their current recruitment policy and academic profile.

## **Section 6-2. Application requirements**

The application must include:

- Documentation of the education and the qualifications on which admission is to be based.
- A project description including:
  - an academic outline of the project
  - an account of any permits from research ethics committees and/or other authorities that will be required to carry out the project
  - a progress plan
  - a funding plan for execution of the project
  - documentation of any special needs for academic resources and materials
  - any plans for periods to be spent at another institution
  - plans for dissemination of results
  - information about any intellectual property restrictions to protect others' rights
- The project description must state whether the project is dependent on permissions from research ethics committees or other authorities or from private individuals (informants, patients, parents, etc.). If possible, this kind of permission should be obtained in writing and submitted with the application.
- The project must have a data management plan.

The application ought to include:

- A plan for the required coursework (training component), including training aimed at general competencies in accordance with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.
- A proposal for at least one academic supervisor and indication of the applicant's proposed affiliation with an active research group.
- Which language the thesis is going to be written in (cf. section 11-1).
- An account of any legal and/or ethical issues raised by the project and how these can be resolved.

Nord University may set additional documentation requirements. The application must contain an overview of relevant publications and an overview of any courses that the applicant would like to have included in the training component.

Nord University may set requirements regarding obligatory residency at the institution.

## **Section 6-3. Infrastructure**

The candidate must be given access to the necessary infrastructure to be able to carry out their research project. The faculty decides what constitutes necessary infrastructure for execution of the project. For candidates with external funding or an external workplace, an agreement is entered into between Nord University and the external party in connection with the individual research project. As a general rule, this kind of agreement must have been entered into before the candidate in question is formally admitted, or immediately afterwards.

## **Section 6-4. Admission decision**

Applicants must normally apply for admission to the doctoral education within three (3) months of the start of the funding.

If less than one (1) year of full-time work remains on the project at the time of application, the application will be rejected.

Decisions on admission are based on an overall assessment of the application and are contingent on the faculty having academic supervisor capacity. The faculty can set criteria for the ranking of qualified applicants if the number of applicants exceeds the admission capacity.

The formal decision letter must include the appointment of at least one academic supervisor, assignment of responsibilities for dealing with other needs outlined in the application, and

specification of the start date and completion date of the agreement period. The start date is normally the same as the start date for the funding.

Admission can be denied if:

- agreements with external third parties will impede the doctoral work being made available to the public and its public defence
- agreements concerning intellectual property rights that have been entered into are so unreasonable that Nord University ought not to be involved in the project
- the applicant will not be able to fulfil the requirement that a minimum of one year of the project must normally be carried out after the candidate has been admitted to the doctoral programme
- the funding is not sufficient for the project to be carried out

## **Section 7. The doctoral agreement**

### **Section 7-1. The parties to the agreement**

Admission to the doctoral education at Nord University is formalised in a written agreement within the framework of the standard agreement for admissions adopted by Nord University. The agreement must be signed by the PhD candidate, the academic supervisor(s) and the faculty that the candidate is being admitted to. The agreement governs the parties' rights and obligations during the admission period and shall ensure that the candidate participates regularly in an active, relevant research environment. The agreement shall also help ensure that the candidate completes their doctoral education within the agreed time frame.

For PhD candidates with funding from, employment at or other contributions from an external party, a separate agreement must be entered into between the candidate, Nord University and the external party.

In cases where the PhD candidate is going to be affiliated with institutions outside Norway, compliance with Nord University's guidelines for this kind of collaboration must be ensured. In addition, a separate agreement must be entered into using the special template. This agreement must normally be appended to the admissions agreement.

### **Section 7-2. Agreement period**

The agreement period corresponds to the funding period and is normally three years for full-time study or four years if the candidate has required work duties corresponding to 25 % of full-time work. Nord University may set provisions regarding the maximum time for completion, not including statutory leaves of absence and required work duties.

In the event of statutory interruptions, the agreement period will be extended accordingly.

The faculty may extend the agreement period on the basis of a valid application. If an extension is granted, the faculty may set additional terms and conditions. Any extension of the agreement period must be related to the employment rights or be specifically clarified in relation to the candidate's funding base.

After the expiry of the agreement period, the parties' rights and obligations pursuant to the PhD agreement cease, such that the PhD candidate may lose their right to academic supervision, to attend courses, and access to Nord University's infrastructure. The candidate may nevertheless apply to have their doctoral work assessed for a PhD degree.

The maximum permitted length of study is six years from the start date to submission of the thesis for assessment. Statutory leaves of absence, extended sickness absence and required work duties are not included in the six years. Stricter requirements for progression during the course of study may be set in supplementary regulations for the PhD programme.

### **Section 7-3. Voluntary termination**

The candidate and the faculty can agree on discontinuation of the doctoral education before the agreed time. In the event of voluntary early termination of the doctoral education, it must be specified in writing how issues related to employment, funding, rights to results, etc. are to be resolved.

In the event of voluntary termination because the candidate wishes to change project or transfer to another programme, the candidate must submit a new application for admission based on the new project.

A thesis prepared under organised academic supervision in a doctoral programme at Nord University, or other institutions in Norway, may not be submitted for assessment as an independent doctoral degree or dr.philos.

### **Section 7-4. Enforced termination in the event of delay or lack of progress or termination of funding**

If one or more of the following conditions are met, the faculty may decide to impose forced termination of the doctoral education:

- Significant delay in the completion of the training component.
- Repeated or serious violations of the candidate's obligations to provide information, follow-up or reports, including failure to submit a progress report (cf. section 10-1).
- Delay in the progress of the research project to such an extent that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the candidate will be able to complete the project within the agreed time frame.
- Discontinuation of the funding during the period may also result in forced termination.

To be valid grounds for forced termination, the lack of progress or delay must be due to factors within the candidate's control.

If the PhD candidate is employed at Nord University, the agreement may only be terminated if the conditions for termination of contract or dismissal laid down in the Civil Service Act are met.

Decisions pursuant to this paragraph are made by the faculty. Appeals are processed by Nord University's appeals committee.

### **Section 7-5. Enforced termination upon cheating at examinations or tests**

If it is found that a PhD candidate has cheated on examinations or tests during the course of the doctoral education, Nord University may decide to annul the examinations or tests (cf. the University and University Colleges Act).

Decisions pursuant to this paragraph are made by the Board itself or by Nord University's appeals committee. Appeals are handled by the Joint Appeals Committee for Student Affairs (cf. the Universities and University Colleges Act and appurtenant regulations).

If the matter is so serious that it can be regarded as scientific dishonesty (cf. the Universities and University Colleges Act and the Act on ethics and integrity in research), Nord University may decide to impose forced termination (cf. section 7-6).

Violations of research ethical guidelines for the subject area may result in forced termination.

### **Section 7-6. Enforced termination upon scientific dishonesty**

If a candidate is guilty of scientific dishonesty (cf. the Universities and University Colleges Act and the Act on ethics and integrity in research), Nord University may decide to impose forced termination.

Decisions on forced termination on grounds of scientific dishonesty are made by the body that the University Board decides. Appeals of these kinds of decisions are handled by the Ministry or a special appeals committee appointed by the Ministry.

## **Section 7-7. Termination and dismissal**

A candidate's employment as a PhD candidate can be terminated when there are valid grounds in circumstances relating to the undertaking or candidate (cf. sections 19 and 20 of the Civil Servants Act), or dismissed without notice pursuant to section 26).

## **PART III IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Section 8. Supervision**

#### **Section 8-1. Appointment of academic supervisors**

The work on the doctoral project must be performed under individual academic supervision. Together, the faculty and academic supervisors shall ensure that the PhD candidate participates in an active research environment.

As a general rule, the candidate shall have at least two academic supervisors, one of whom must be designated as the main supervisor. The main academic supervisor ought to have been appointed at the time of admission.

The main academic supervisor has the primary academic responsibility for the PhD candidate's academic development and execution of the doctoral project in accordance with the progress plan. If the faculty appoints an external main academic supervisor, a co-supervisor from Nord University must be appointed.

Co-supervisors are experts in the field who provide guidance and who share the academic responsibility for the candidate with the main academic supervisor.

The rules on impartiality in chapter II of the Public Administration Act, section 6: "Concerning disqualification", apply to the academic supervisors.

All academic supervisors must have a PhD or equivalent qualification in the relevant field and be active researchers in the field of study.

At least one of the appointed academic supervisors must have previous experience of supervision or training of PhD candidates.

Both the PhD candidate and the academic supervisor can ask the faculty to appoint a different academic supervisor for the candidate. The academic supervisor cannot stop supervising the candidate until a new academic supervisor has been appointed. Any disputes regarding the academic rights and obligations of the academic supervisor and the candidate can be reported by either party to the faculty for review and decision.

#### **Section 8-2. Content of the supervision**

The candidate and the academic supervisors ought to have regular contact. The frequency of contact ought to be indicated in the annual progress report (cf. section 10-1).

The candidate and the main academic supervisor ought to review the project description together and assess the need for any adjustments at the first opportunity and no later than within three (3) months after the start date. Any changes to the project description must be approved by the faculty.

Academic supervisors shall advise candidates on the delimitation of topics and research questions, assess the methods and results, including forms of documentation and presentation, and advise the candidate in the relevant academic discourse. The candidate must receive guidance on ethical issues related to the doctoral work.

The academic supervisors have a duty to remain informed about the progress of the candidate's work and to assess it in relation to the progress plan in the project description (cf. section 6-2).

The academic supervisors have a duty to follow up on academic issues that may result in a delay in the doctoral education, to ensure that it can be completed within the standard time frame.

## **Section 9. The training component**

### **Section 9-1. Purpose, content and scope**

The doctoral education must be organised such that it can be completed within the standard time frame.

The faculty is responsible for ensuring that the training component and the work on the project provide education at a high academic level in accordance with international standards. The training component must include training in academic dissemination and an introduction to ethics, theory and methodology. Together with the doctoral work, the training component must contribute to the achievement of the expected learning outcomes defined in the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.

The faculty ought to offer the PhD candidate guidance on future career opportunities both within and outside academia, including making the candidate aware of the competencies they have acquired through their doctoral work.

If Nord University does not organise the entire training component itself, arrangements must be made to ensure that the candidate receives similar training at other institutions.

The training component must correspond to at least 30 credits, of which at least 20 credits must be completed after admission. A larger training component may be stipulated in the supplementary guidelines for the doctoral programmes (cf. the programme description).

On application and after academic assessment, elements completed before admission to the doctoral programme may be incorporated as part of the training component. Elements that are to be included in the training component ought not to have been completed more than two (2) years prior to the date of admission.

Courses at doctoral level at another institution must be approved in accordance with the rules of the Universities and University Colleges Act.

### **Section 9-2. Affiliation with an academic community**

It is a prerequisite that the candidate contributes to the University's academic community, for example through academic activities such as seminars, workshops, and research and dissemination tasks. The faculty and the academic supervisor must systematically follow up these activities so that the candidate's contact with the academic community is planned and realised.

### **Section 9-3. The candidate's rights in the event of a leave of absence**

PhD candidates who have parental leave from the doctoral education may nevertheless follow teaching and sit examinations in subjects and courses that are going to be included as part of the candidate's required coursework (training component) during their period of leave, in accordance with chapter 14, section 14-10, fourth paragraph, of the National Insurance Act and the circular from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) on section 14-10, fourth paragraph, of 18 December 2006.

Candidates with an external employer have a duty to ensure that the faculty is informed of any leave of absence, the scope of any required work duties, and anything else that is relevant to the progress of the doctoral work.

## **Section 10. Reporting and mid-term evaluation**

### **Section 10-1. Reporting**

Nord University's system for quality assurance of education must include measures to detect insufficient progress in the work on the project and shortcomings in the academic supervision, and must have routines for handling any deficiencies detected. This system will normally include

submission of individual annual reports from the PhD candidate and the academic supervisor and shall be designed to avoid unnecessary double reporting.

The candidate and the academic supervisor have equal responsibility for reporting. Failure to submit a progress report or inadequate progress reporting from the candidate may result in forced termination before the end of the agreement period (cf. section 7-4). Academic supervisors who fail to follow up on the reporting requirements may be relieved of their supervision responsibilities.

Significant changes to the approved project description must be submitted to the faculty for approval. If necessary, the faculty may require special reporting.

### **Section 10-2. Mid-term evaluation**

A mid-term evaluation of the doctoral work ought normally to be carried out in the third or fourth semester. The candidate must present their work and will be evaluated by a group consisting of at least two persons appointed by the faculty. The evaluation group must consider the candidate's academic status, progress and research-ethical questions, and shall provide feedback to the candidate, the academic supervisor and the faculty.

If the evaluation group reports significant shortcomings in the doctoral work, steps must be taken to rectify the situation.

## **Section 11. Requirements for academic thesis**

### **Section 11-1. Thesis requirements**

An academic thesis must be an independent piece of research work or research and development work that meets international standards in terms of ethical requirements, academic level and methodology in the discipline.

The thesis must contribute to the development of new academic knowledge and must be at a level that merits publication or presentation to the public in an appropriate format as part of the research-based development of knowledge in the discipline.

The thesis can consist of a monograph or a compendium of several smaller works. If the thesis consists of several smaller works, an account must be provided of how they are related in an introductory summary section (the "*kappe*").

If the thesis consists mainly of articles, the candidate must normally be the lead author of at least half of the articles. If the authors are listed in alphabetical order, the candidate must have performed at least 50 per cent of the work on at least half of the articles. Requirements regarding the number of articles and the introductory summary section shall be set in supplementary guidelines for the PhD programme.

The main component of the thesis may be a new product or a systematised compilation of data, and it may be presented in a different form (e.g. sound, images, video, electronic forms of presentation) when its theoretical and methodological basis are not apparent from the product itself. In such cases, in addition to presenting the product itself, the thesis must also have an additional part. In this additional part, the candidate must provide a written account of the research question, the choice of theory and methods, and an assessment of the result in relation to international standards and the academic level within the field.

Theses must be written in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English. If the candidate wants to submit their thesis in another language, they must apply for special permission to do so in the application for approval of the project description (cf. section 6-2). The faculty responsible for the assessment will make the final decision on this.

### **Section 11-2. Joint work**

The faculty decides whether a thesis produced by several people jointly can be submitted for assessment, on the condition it is possible to identify the individual contributions.

For works that have been created in collaboration with several partners or co-authors, the PhD candidate must follow the norms for crediting contributions that are generally accepted in the academic community, in accordance with international standards.

If the thesis or parts of it have been created in cooperation with other authors or partners, the PhD candidate must follow the norms for co-authorship that are generally accepted in the academic community, in accordance with international standards.

A thesis that includes contributions from other people must be accompanied by a signed declaration describing the candidate's input in each piece of work. The declaration, signed by all the contributors, must be submitted to the assessment committee along with the thesis.

### **Section 11-3. Work not eligible for assessment**

Works or parts of a work that the candidate has had approved as the basis for previous examinations or degrees may not be submitted for assessment unless they are included as only a minor part of the thesis. However, data, analyses and methodologies from previous degrees may be used as a basis for the work on the project.

On application and after academic assessment, academic works published prior to admission to the PhD programme may be included in the thesis. Previously published works cannot be approved for use in the thesis if more than five (5) years have passed from the date of publication to the date of admission. On application and after academic assessment, the faculty may grant exemption from this rule in extraordinary cases.

A thesis may only be submitted to one educational institution for assessment.

## **Section 12. Rights to use of research results**

### **Section 12-1. Use of the thesis in teaching and research activities**

Nord University is entitled, without payment, to use those parts of the PhD thesis to which the PhD candidate has sole copyright and other academic works produced as a result of the work on the thesis and to which the PhD candidate has sole copyright in teaching and research activities at Nord University. A special agreement on equivalent use will be entered into with candidates who are not employed at Nord University. In the event of such use, the PhD candidate shall be credited in accordance with relevant legislation and standard academic practice.

### **Section 12-2. Duty to report work results with potential for commercial exploitation**

The intellectual property rights of Nord University and any collaborating institutions must be regulated in a separate agreement. This also applies to agreements entered into at the faculty level.

PhD candidates employed at Nord University must report research results with commercial potential that are produced during the employment relationship in accordance with the University's regulations in force at the time (cf. the Employees' Inventions Act of 17 April 1970).

For PhD candidates with an external employer, a corresponding obligation to report must be stipulated in an agreement between Nord University, represented by the faculty, the PhD candidate and the external employer.

For PhD candidates without an employer, a corresponding obligation to report must be stipulated in the admissions agreement between Nord University, represented by the faculty, and the PhD candidate.

### **Section 12-3. Copyright, patenting and other intellectual property rights (IPR)**

The provisions in this section must not be interpreted in any way that contravenes the Norwegian Copyright Act of 12 May 1961 or regulations ensuing therefrom.

If the candidate is the sole author of the PhD thesis, he or she alone holds the sole copyright to the work.

Articles or other contributions written by several authors, where it is not possible to identify the individual contributions, are joint works. The authors have joint copyright to these kinds of articles.

If the candidate, in connection with the PhD project, makes a patentable invention, they must, without undue delay, notify the University about it in writing, in accordance with section 5 of the Employees' Inventions Act regarding the right to inventions made by workers. Pursuant to section 4 of the same Act (cf. section 6, first and second paragraphs), the University is entitled to demand that part of or all the rights to the invention be transferred to it. If the invention was produced in collaboration with the academic supervisor, the candidate and academic supervisor shall together determine their respective, individual shares of the patentable invention.

The candidate is nonetheless entitled to publish the invention on the conditions set forth in section 6, third paragraph, of the Employees' Inventions Act. The right to publish applies correspondingly to the academic supervisor, if the invention was made jointly and the candidate and a third party's rights do not preclude this.

No restrictions may be imposed on the publication of and public access to a PhD thesis, with the exception of a pre-arranged postponement in order to allow external parties to consider filing for a patent.

In connection with the publication of or public access to a PhD thesis, Nord University shall normally be credited if the University has made a necessary and significant contribution to or has provided the basis for the work being published or made publicly available. The same applies to external parties that have also made a necessary and significant contribution. Employment at Nord University or an external party while the research work was being done is considered a necessary and significant contribution. Other institutions and/or businesses may also be deemed to have made a necessary and significant contribution.

## **PART IV COMPLETION**

### **Section 13. Submission and application for assessment**

#### **Section 13-1. Basis for assessment**

The requirements for awarding an academic PhD are set out in section 3-2.

A candidate applies for assessment by submitting an academic thesis (cf. section 13-2).

The main academic supervisor is responsible for notifying the relevant unit at the faculty that submission or an application for assessment is imminent, so that the necessary preparations can be made.

#### **Section 13-2. Submission of the thesis**

An application for assessment of a thesis may only be submitted after the required coursework (the training component) has been approved.

A submitted thesis cannot be retracted until a final decision has been made as to whether it is worthy of defence for the PhD degree. The thesis will be assessed "as is" at the time of submission.

The application must include the following attachments:

- The thesis in an approved form, in accordance with Nord University's provisions, and in the form and number of copies stipulated by the faculty, and in accordance with supplementary guidelines for the PhD programme.
- Documentation of approved coursework (training component).
- Documentation of the necessary permissions (cf. section 6-2).

- Declarations from co-authors where required in accordance with section 11-2.
- Statement specifying whether the thesis is being submitted for assessment for the first time or the second time.
- Declaration that the thesis, or a part thereof, has not been submitted for assessment at another institution.

The thesis shall be submitted electronically via Nord University's submissions portal.

The faculty must ensure that the time between submission of the thesis and its defence is as short as possible, normally no longer than five (5) months.

### **Section 13-3. Processing of the application**

The faculty processes the application to have an academic thesis assessed. Applications that do not fulfil the requirements defined in section 13-2 will be rejected.

The faculty can, on an independent basis, reject an application for assessment of a thesis if it is obvious that the thesis is not of a high enough academic standard and will be rejected by an assessment committee.

### **Section 14. Appointment of the assessment committee**

Once the faculty has approved an application for assessment of an academic thesis, it must appoint an expert committee consisting of at least three members who will assess the thesis, the trial lecture on an assigned topic, and the public defence (disputation). The impartiality rules in section 6, second paragraph, of the Public Administration Act apply to the committee members.

The assessment committee must normally be composed such that:

- both sexes are represented
- at least one of its members is not affiliated with Nord University
- at least one of its members does not have their main position at a Norwegian institution
- all members have a PhD or equivalent qualifications in the relevant subject area
- the majority of the assessment committee are external members

If these criteria are departed from, an explanation must be provided stating the grounds for this.

The faculty determines the procedure for nomination of candidates for the assessment committee. An explanation of the reasoning behind the composition of the committee must be provided, indicating how the committee as a whole covers the fields included in the doctoral work. The faculty appoints either one of the committee members or another person to serve as the chair of the committee.

Appointed academic supervisors and others who have contributed to the thesis may not be members of the assessment committee or involved in its coordination.

When required, the faculty may appoint an alternate to sit on the assessment committee.

The candidate must be notified of the proposed composition of the committee and be given the opportunity to submit written comments no later than one week after the proposal has been made known to the candidate.

### **Section 15. The work of the assessment committee**

#### **Section 15-1. Collection of supplementary information**

The assessment committee can request access to the candidate's underlying source material and additional information to supplement or clarify the doctoral work.

On request, the main academic supervisor must provide an account of the academic supervision and work on the thesis.

The assessment committee must be sent the University's PhD regulations with supplementary guidelines for the relevant doctoral degree, and any guidelines for the assessment of the doctoral degree.

### **Section 15-2. Correction of formal errors in the thesis**

After submission of the thesis, the candidate can apply to the faculty for permission to correct formal errors in the thesis. The candidate must submit a complete list of errata that they are requesting permission to correct as an appendix to the application. The faculty sets a deadline for applications for correction of errata. This deadline must be before the assessment committee's deadline for submission of their recommendation. The list of errata is forwarded to the assessment committee. Errors may only be corrected once.

### **Section 15-3. The assessment committee's report**

The assessment committee submits a report stating whether the doctoral work is worthy of defence for the PhD degree and explaining the reasoning behind its recommendation. All parts of the submitted or presented documentation must be discussed in relation to the criteria defined in section 11-1. The report ought to be discursive and end with a clear conclusion regarding whether or not the work should be approved. Any dissenting opinions or individual statements by committee members must be included and explained in the report.

The assessment committee's report must be ready no later than three (3) months after the committee received all the parts of the doctoral work for assessment. If the committee permits minor revisions to an academic thesis (cf. section 15-4), a new deadline starts to run from the date the thesis is re-submitted.

If the committee finds that extensive changes related to the theory, research question, hypothesis, material or methods used in the thesis are necessary in order to be able to deem the work worthy of public defence, the committee must reject the thesis (cf. section 15-5).

The assessment committee's report is submitted to the faculty, which then presents it to the candidate. The candidate is given ten (10) working days within which to make written comments on the report. If the candidate does not wish to make any comments, the faculty should be informed of this in writing at the first opportunity.

Any comments from the candidate should be sent to the faculty. The faculty makes the final decision on the matter (cf. sections 16-1 and 16-2).

### **Section 15-4. Reworking of a submitted thesis**

On the basis of the submitted thesis and any additional material, the assessment committee may recommend that the faculty permit the candidate to make minor revisions to the thesis before the committee submits its final report. The committee must provide a written list of the specific items that the candidate must rework.

If the institution permits minor revisions to the thesis, a deadline normally not exceeding three (3) months shall be set. A new deadline for submission of the committee's final report must also be set. The candidate may not appeal the faculty's decision pursuant to this subsection.

### **Section 15-5. Resubmission**

An academic thesis that has been found not worthy of defence can be resubmitted for assessment in a revised form no earlier than six (6) months after the faculty has made its decision.

The faculty then appoints a new assessment committee, preferably including at least one of the members of the original committee. A doctoral work can only be resubmitted for assessment once.

A candidate who submits a new application for assessment must state that the work has previously been assessed and was found not worthy of defence (cf. section 13-2).

## **Section 16. The faculty's procedures relating to the assessment committee's recommendation**

### **Section 16-1. The faculty's processing of a unanimous committee decision**

If the committee submits a unanimous recommendation and the faculty adopts the committee's recommendation as the basis for its assessment, the faculty will make a decision in accordance with the unanimous recommendation.

If the faculty finds that there are valid grounds to doubt whether the committee's unanimous recommendation should be used as the basis for its decision, the faculty must request further clarification from the assessment committee and, if necessary, appoint two new experts to make individual statements on the doctoral work. These kinds of additional statements or individual evaluations must be presented to the candidate, who will be given ten days to make comments.

The faculty makes the final decision in the case on the basis of the assessment committee's recommendation and the statements obtained.

### **Section 16-2. The faculty's processing of a non-unanimous committee decision**

If the committee submits a non-unanimous recommendation and the faculty chooses to adopt the majority's opinion as the basis for its decision, the faculty will make a decision in accordance with the majority's recommendation.

If the committee submits a non-unanimous recommendation and the faculty is considering adopting the minority's opinion as the basis for its assessment, the faculty may request further clarification from the assessment committee and, if necessary, appoint two new experts to make individual statements on the thesis. These kinds of additional statements or individual evaluations must be presented to the candidate, who will be given the opportunity to make comments. If both of the new experts concur with the majority of the assessment committee in the original report, the committee's recommendation must be followed.

In the event of disagreement or if both support the minority, the new experts shall resign. The faculty will then appoint a new committee that can approve or reject the thesis with a simple majority.

The candidate will be informed of the outcome after the statements from the new experts have been processed.

## **Section 17. Public availability of the thesis**

### **Section 17-1. Requirements regarding the printed thesis**

When a thesis is found worthy of public defence, the faculty will have the thesis printed in an approved format in accordance with Nord University's regulations.

The PhD candidate must prepare a brief written summary (abstract) of the thesis in English and Norwegian, the purpose of which is to make the thesis and its results known to the Norwegian and international research community. If the thesis was written in a language other than English or Norwegian, an abstract must also be provided in the language of the thesis. The abstract must be included in the thesis and, like the thesis itself, will be made publicly available.

### **Section 17-2. Public availability before the disputation**

The academic thesis shall be publicly available no later than two (2) weeks prior to the date of the public defence ("disputation"). The thesis must be made available in the form in which it was submitted for assessment, with any revisions made on the basis of the committee's preliminary comments (cf. section 15-4) and correction of formal errors (errata) (cf. section 15-2).

### **Section 17-3. Publication of theses**

No restrictions may be placed on the publication of the doctoral work, except in the event of a prior agreement concerning postponement of the date of publication.

Pre-arranged postponement of publication must be limited to a period of maximum two years after the public defence. The purpose of this kind of delay is to enable Nord University and any external party that has fully or partially funded the candidate's doctoral education to consider patenting, etc. (cf. section 12-3).

External parties cannot demand that all or part of the PhD thesis be withheld from the public domain (cf. section 6-4).

As a general rule, published parts of a PhD thesis from Nord University will be made publicly available, either through publication in an open access journal or via Nord University's knowledge archive.

Unpublished parts of the thesis shall be made publicly available no later than two years after the public defence and unpublished monographs no later than four years after the public defence. All parts of a thesis must be publicly available no later than five years after the public defence.

In connection with publication or public presentation, candidates must follow the applicable guidelines on the crediting of institutions. The main rule is that an institution must be mentioned if it has made a necessary and significant contribution to or laid a basis for the work being made publicly available. Other institutions must also be credited if they meet the requirements regarding participation.

## **Section 18. The doctoral examination**

### **Section 18-1. Trial lecture**

After the thesis has been submitted for assessment, the PhD candidate must hold a trial lecture. The trial lecture is an independent part of the doctoral examination and will be on an assigned topic. The objective is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge outside the topic of their thesis and their ability to convey this knowledge in a lecture situation.

The evaluation committee chooses the title of the trial lecture.

The PhD candidate is notified of the title of the trial lecture ten (10) working days before it is due to take place.

The topic of the lecture must not be directly related to the topic of the doctoral work and shall challenge the candidate to discuss aspects that go beyond the thesis.

The trial lecture shall be held in the language of the thesis, unless the faculty approves another language.

The assessment committee determines whether the candidate has passed the trial lecture examination or not. If the candidate is assessed as not passing the trial lecture examination, the assessment committee must explain the reasoning behind its decision.

The trial lecture examination must be passed before the public defence can be held.

### **Section 18-2. Public defence of the thesis (disputation)**

The public defence of the thesis must normally take place after the trial lecture has been held and approved, and within two (2) months of the faculty finding the work worthy of defence.

The time and location of the public defence must be announced at least ten (10) working days before it is due to be held.

The committee that originally assessed the thesis also assesses the public defence. The public defence takes place in the language of the thesis unless the faculty, at the suggestion of the assessment committee, approves another language.

As a general rule, there must normally be two opponents. The two opponents must be members of the assessment committee and are appointed by the faculty.

The public defence is chaired by the dean or a person authorised by the dean. The chair of the defence gives a presentation of the submission and evaluation of the thesis and the result of the trial lecture. The PhD candidate then provides an account of the purpose and findings of the doctoral work. The first opponent starts the questioning of the candidate, and the second opponent concludes the questioning. A different distribution of the tasks normally assigned to the opponents and between the candidate and the first opponent may be stipulated in supplementary guidelines for the PhD programme. After both opponents have concluded their questioning, members of the audience will have the opportunity to comment *ex auditorio*. One of the opponents rounds up the opposition, and the chair of the defence concludes the public defence.

The assessment committee makes a recommendation to the faculty, in which it provides an account of its assessment of the defence of the thesis. The recommendation culminates in a conclusion stating whether the defence is approved or not. If the defence is assessed as not approved, the assessment committee must explain the reasoning behind its recommendation.

### **Section 19. Approval of the doctoral examination**

The faculty makes the final decision on approval of the doctoral examination on the basis of the assessment committee's recommendation.

If the assessment committee does not approve the trial lecture (cf. section 18-1), a new trial lecture must be held. The new trial lecture must be on a new topic and must be held no later than six (6) months after the first attempt. A new trial lecture on an assigned topic can only be held once. As far as possible, the new examination will be assessed by the same committee that assessed the original examination, unless the faculty decides otherwise.

If the faculty decides, in accordance with the assessment committee's recommendation, not to approve the public defence, the PhD candidate may defend the thesis one more time. A new defence can be held at the earliest after six (6) months and must be assessed, as far as possible, by the same committee that assessed the original defence.

### **Section 20. Conferral of the degree and diploma**

#### **Section 20-1. Conferral of the degree**

Based on the faculty's decision that the training component and all parts of the doctoral examination have been approved, the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD) will be conferred on the candidate by the board or another body authorised by the board.

#### **Section 20-2. Certificate and diploma**

Certificates are issued by Nord University. The certificate contains information about the content of the training component, the date and title of the trial lecture, the title of the thesis and the date of the public defence of the thesis. The University determines which additional information will be included in the degree certificate.

Nord University will also issue a diploma supplement in accordance with the applicable guidelines on diploma supplements.

In addition to the degree certificate issued by Nord University, a PhD diploma signed by the rector and faculty dean is issued.

## **PART V JOINT DEGREES AND COTUTELLE AGREEMENTS**

### **Section 21. Joint degrees and cotutelle agreements**

#### **Section 21-1. Joint degrees and cotutelle agreements**

The institution may enter into an agreement with one or more Norwegian or foreign institutions regarding collaboration in the form of joint degrees or cotutelle.

Agreements on collaboration on joint degrees or cotutelle may stipulate exemption from other provisions in these recommended guidelines, if this is necessary due to the regulations of the collaborating institutions. These kinds of exemptions, both individually and together, must be justifiable.

#### **Section 21-2. Joint degrees**

The term “joint degree” is defined as a collaboration between two or more institutions, in which the partner institutions are jointly responsible for admission, academic supervision, the conferral of the degree, and other elements described in these Regulations. The collaboration is normally organised in a consortium and is regulated in an agreement between the members of the consortium.

For a completed joint degree, a joint degree certificate is issued in the form of:

- a) a degree certificate issued by all the consortium members,
- b) a degree certificate issued by each of the consortium members,

or a combination of a) and b)

An agreement to issue a joint degree is normally only entered into if there is already an established, stable academic collaboration between Nord University and at least one of the other consortium members. The Board is responsible for establishing detailed guidelines for collaboration on joint degrees, including templates for collaboration agreements.

#### **Section 21-3. Cotutelle agreements**

The term “cotutelle” is defined as the joint academic supervision of PhD candidates and collaboration on the training of PhD candidates. A cotutelle agreement must be entered into for each individual candidate and ought to be based on stable, academic collaboration between the institutions.

#### **Section 21-4. Joint degree and cotutelle requirements**

No exemptions may be made from qualifications required for admission, requirement that the thesis must be made available to the public, and the requirement for a public defence assessed by an impartial assessment committee.

## **PART VI APPEALS, ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 22. Appeals**

#### **Section 22-1. Appeal against rejection of an application for admission, a decision to terminate a candidate's right to study, or rejection of an application for approval of elements in the training component**

Rejection of an application for admission, a decision to terminate a candidate's right to study, or rejection of an application for approval of elements of the training component may be appealed under the provisions of the Public Administration Act concerning the appeal of individual decisions.

The appeal, including a description of the grounds for the appeal, must be sent to the faculty. If the rejection is upheld, the appeal must be sent, without undue delay, to the appeals committee at Nord University for final decision.

### **Section 22-2. Appeal against examinations in the training component**

Appeals pertaining to grades on examinations taken as part of the training component are governed by the provisions on appeals regarding a student's grade in the Universities and University Colleges Act.

Appeals pertaining to procedural errors in examinations taken as part of the required coursework (training component) are governed by the provisions on appeals regarding procedural errors in connection with examinations in the Universities and University Colleges Act.

### **Section 22-3. Appeal against rejection of an application for assessment or a decision not to approve a thesis, trial lecture or public defence**

Rejection of an application for assessment of doctoral work and a decision not to approve a thesis, trial lecture or public defence may be appealed under the provisions of the Public Administration Act concerning the appeal of individual decisions. The appeal, including a description of the grounds for the appeal, must be sent to the faculty.

In connection with an appeal against a decision not to approve a thesis, trial lecture or public defence, the faculty may, once the appeal has been presented to the assessment committee that submitted the original recommendation (cf. section 18-2), annul or amend the decision, if it finds the appeal justified. If the faculty dismisses the appeal, the appeal is sent to the appeals committee at Nord University. The appeals committee can investigate all aspects of an appealed decision.

If the faculty or appeals committee finds it necessary, individuals or a committee may be appointed to appraise the assessment and the criteria on which it was based, or to undertake a new or supplementary expert assessment.

### **Section 23. Entry into force**

These Regulations regarding the philosophiae doctor (PhD) degree at Nord University enter into force on 1 January 2021. The Regulations regarding the philosophiae doctor (PhD) degree at Nord University adopted on 6 January 2016 are repealed from the same date.

### **Section 24. Transitional provisions**

Any person who have been granted admission and begun their studies before 31 December 2020 retain the rights ensuing from the PhD Regulations of 6 January 2016 and appurtenant guidelines that applied to their course of study until 31 December 2021. Thereafter, they must adhere to the Regulations regarding the philosophiae doctor (PhD) degree at Nord University of 1 January 2021. Candidates may opt to follow the new Regulations before that date. This kind of transition must be made within six (6) months of the Regulations regarding the philosophiae doctor (PhD) degree at Nord University of 1 January 2021 entering into force.

Irrespective of the provisions in the first paragraph, the following applies to all candidates admitted to a PhD programme at Nord University as per 1 January 2021:

Section 15. (The work of the assessment committee) applies to all candidates who submit a thesis on or after 1 January 2021.

Section 17-3. (Publication of theses), third and fourth paragraphs, on open access requirements apply to all candidates who submit a thesis on or after 1 January 2021.