

Guidelines for evaluation of PhD theses at Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Biosciences

February 2020

The "[Regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor \(PhD\) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences](#)" (in force 1 July 2020) describes the requirements for the PhD thesis and the work of the evaluation committee in Sections 10 and 15:

Section 10 PhD thesis

Section 10.1 Thesis requirements

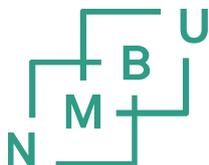
- (1) The thesis shall be an independent, scientific work that fulfils international standards and is of high academic quality in terms of the formulation of research questions, the specification of concepts, the methodological, theoretical and empirical basis, documentation, the use of literature and the form of presentation.
- (2) The thesis shall contribute to the development of new scientific knowledge and must be of sufficiently high academic quality to merit publication as part of the scientific literature in the field.
- (3) The thesis may consist of a monograph or a compendium of several scientific works in article form. If the thesis consists of several shorter papers, it must also contain an introductory chapter which summarizes and compares the research questions and conclusions presented in the shorter works in an overall perspective, and which also documents the coherence of the thesis. The PhD candidate must be sole author of the summary.
- (4) The thesis should contain a brief abstract in English as well as in Norwegian.
- (5) When the PhD candidate is not the sole author, signed authorship declarations specifying the research contributions of both the PhD candidate and the co-author(s) shall accompany the submission of the thesis. The PhD candidate is responsible for obtaining such declarations. The Vancouver Protocol Recommendations for co-authorship must be complied.

The Faculty of Biosciences has given Guidelines for the writing the introductory section of the PhD thesis. [add link]

Section 15 The work of the evaluation committee

When evaluating the thesis, particular emphasis must be placed on whether the thesis satisfies the requirements stated in section 10 (see above). An overall assessment shall be made and strengths and weaknesses considered, including an evaluation of whether the material and methods are appropriate in relation to the questions raised in the thesis, and whether the arguments and conclusions presented are tenable.

Section 15.1 Obtaining supplementary information



The department shall ensure that the committee members receive a copy of the [Guidelines for the Evaluation of Candidates for Norwegian Doctoral Degrees](#) (see particularly Sections 3 and 5. In case of discrepancies between these national guidelines and the NMBU PhD regulations, the latter applies). The evaluation committee may require access to the PhD candidate's basic data and the submission of additional or clarifying information. The evaluation committee may request the academic supervisor to provide information about the supervision carried out and the work on the thesis.

Section 15.2 The evaluation committee's recommendation on the thesis

(1) The committee shall submit *a joint, substantiated report* to the faculty to which the PhD candidate has been admitted stating whether the thesis is worthy of being defended for the PhD degree. The committee shall normally deliver this report no later than 25 working days prior to the planned public defence.

(2) The report's conclusion must clearly state whether the committee (a or b or c):

a. *Recommends approval* of the thesis as worthy of defence:

If the evaluation committee unanimously recommends approval of the thesis, the trial lecture and public defence may proceed.

b. Does not recommend the approval of the thesis as worthy of defence but recommends that a *reworking* of the thesis should be allowed:

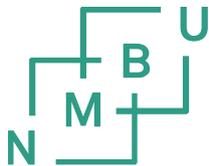
On the basis of the submitted thesis and any supplementary material, the evaluation committee may recommend that the faculty should permit minor revisions before the final recommendation is given. The committee must provide a detailed overview in writing of the specific material the candidate must rework. If the faculty permits such a revision, the deadline for this is normally a maximum of three (3) months. The evaluation committee must give its final recommendation within six (6) weeks of receiving the revised thesis. The committee's decision pursuant to this paragraph cannot be appealed by the PhD candidate.

c. Does not recommend (i.e. *refuses*) the thesis as worthy of a public defence:

If the committee finds that fundamental changes regarding the theories, hypotheses, material or methods employed in the thesis are necessary before the work can be recommended as meriting public defence, the thesis must be refused. A PhD thesis which has been refused can be evaluated in a revised version at the earliest six (6) months after the department has made its decision.

The rector appoints a new evaluation committee on the recommendation of the faculty to which the candidate is affiliated. At least one of the members of the original committee should be reappointed. A new evaluation can take place only once. When resubmitting the thesis, the PhD candidate must make it clear that the work has been evaluated previously and has not been found worthy of a public defence.

(3) Reasons for any dissenting opinions among the committee's members must be given in the report.



Section 15.3 Correction of formal errors in the thesis

(2) The PhD candidate may apply to the faculty for permission to correct formal errors in the thesis after submission. The application must be accompanied by a complete list of the errors (*errata*) that he/she wishes to correct. An application to correct formal errors must be submitted no less than four (4) weeks before the disputation, and such an application can be made only once.

Routine: If the list of errata is approved, it will be forwarded to the evaluation committee.

The Evaluation committee's coordinator

The local member of the Evaluation committee serves as its coordinator. The coordinator should be able to guide the opponents on how to write the [assessment of the thesis on Form 4.4](#). It must be a joint text that all agree on, not individual statements, unless it includes dissenting opinions. If in doubt, please consult the Head of Research education at BIOVIT.