

# Regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Laid down by the Board of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) on 15.05.2014 pursuant to Act No 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to Universities and University Colleges Sections 3-3 and 3-7. Revised and approved by the University Board 19.01.17, entry into force 01.03.2017.

(This is a translated version of the valid Norwegian regulation for the degree and slight deviations from the original text may occur.)

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## **I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS**

### **Section 1      Applicability**

These regulations apply to the education that leads to the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). The regulations concern the objectives of, responsibility for, admission to, and implementation and conclusion of the PhD education, as well as joint degrees and cotutelle agreements.

### **Section 2      Scope, content and objectives of the PhD education**

(1) The PhD education at NMBU shall qualify candidates for independent research of high international standard, and for research and other work that requires high levels of scientific insight and analytical thinking, in accordance with recognised principles of academic and research ethics.

(2) The objective of the PhD education is to give candidates knowledge, skills and expertise in line with the Norwegian qualifications framework. The programme has a nominal length of three (3) years of full-time study. The most important component of the programme is an independent work of research that is carried out with regular supervision.

(3) The PhD degree is awarded on the basis of:

- a. approved completion of the required coursework
- b. an approved doctoral thesis
- c. an approved trial lecture on a specified topic
- d. an approved public defence of the doctoral thesis (disputation).

### **Section 3      Responsibility for the PhD education**

The University Board has the prime responsibility for the PhD programme at NMBU while the faculties are responsible for implementation and follow-up and can stipulate special requirements and supplementary provisions for their own faculty. When the faculty is the decision maker, the faculty board shall determine the division of responsibility between different faculty bodies. The research committee at NMBU (NMBU-FU) advises the rector in matters that concern the PhD education. NMBU-FU has a special responsibility for initiating measures to improve the quality of the PhD education, cf. "Guidelines for NMBU Research Committee".

### **Section 4      Quality Assurance**

The quality assurance system for the educational and research programme at NMBU also covers the PhD education.

## **II. ADMISSIONS**

### **Section 5      Admissions**

#### **Section 5.1      Conditions for admission**

(1) To be admitted to the PhD programmes, an applicant must have an academically relevant education corresponding to a five-year Norwegian degree programme, where 120 credits are at master's degree level, for example a master's degree, a cand.med.vet. degree or other relevant five-year programme of professional study/ [integrated master](#). The applicant must have achieved learning outcomes in the first degree corresponding to the descriptions given in the Norwegian qualifications framework's second cycle. The faculty to which admission is sought may set additional requirements stipulating that applicants must complete special courses and/or pass a special test prior to admission.

(2) The applicant must have a documented strong academic background from previous studies. The faculty to which admission is sought can specify this in more detail, for example in the form of grade requirements.

(3) Admission takes place continuously throughout the year. The individual faculty is the formal admission authority.

## **Section 5.2      Application for admission**

(1) An application for admission shall be submitted using the standard faculty form to the relevant faculty. [This shall normally happen](#) at the latest two (2) months after the start-up date, and be processed at the latest three (3) months after the start-up date. For candidates employed at NMBU, the start-up date is the same as the date of assuming the position; for other candidates the start-up date is the same as the start-up date of the funding contract.

(2) The application for admission must include:

- documentation of the education on which admission will be based
- a brief description of the project with a plan of the research work
- documented access to the required infrastructure for implementation of the research project and, if relevant, an agreement with an external party on this
- a request to use a language other than English or Norwegian in the thesis if relevant
- a proposal for a supervisory team and indication of affiliation to an active research community
- any plans for a stay at another institution
- an overview of sources of funding and if relevant, any agreement on external funding
- Proof of citizenship / passport
- [Documentation of proficiency in both written and oral English](#)
  - o [Required qualifications in English with one of the following:](#)
    - a. [Upper secondary school English: Level 1 \(140 hours per year\) with the grade 4 or better](#)
    - b. [A pass in upper secondary school, English advanced course: Level I and/or II](#)
    - c. [IB Diploma \(International Baccalaureat\)](#)
    - d. [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\) with a score of at least 580 points for the paper-based test \(PBT\) or 92 points for the internet-based test \(IBT\)](#)
    - e. [International English Language Testing Service \(IELTS Academic\) with a minimum score of 7.0 points](#)
    - f. [At least one completed year of university studies in the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia](#)
    - g. [A completed Bachelor degree, or a minimum of one complete year of graduate study, with English as the teaching language, in a Nordic country](#)
    - h. [A university degree in the subject English Language or English Literature](#)
  - o [Other approved documentation by individual assessment.](#)

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(4) Admission may be made conditional upon:

- a. Funding, admission capacity, supplementary education and fulfilment of infrastructure requirements are solved
- b. Agreement being reached on any intellectual property rights issues when the contract is signed (cf. section 6-1).

(5) Admission may be refused if:

- a. Agreements relating to copyright will prevent the publication and public defence of the thesis
- b. Agreements relating to intellectual property rights that have been entered into are so unreasonable that NMBU ought not contribute to the project
- c. The applicant will not be able to fulfil the requirement of at least one year of the project being carried out after admission to the PhD programme. Candidates whose first degree is cand.med.vet. with the research programme are exempted from the provision of a minimum of one year's remaining work after admission.

### **Section 5.3      Decisions on admissions**

(1) Decisions on admissions are made by the faculty itself. The decision will be based on an overall assessment of the application. A condition for admission is that the applicant's academic background meets the admission requirements (cf. section 5.1 and 5.2).

(2) The faculty may establish admission criteria in its ranking of qualified applicants when the number of applicants exceeds the capacity of the programme. The decision must specify the supervisory team and allocate the responsibility for dealing with other requirements indicated in the application, and the duration of the contract must be stipulated with a start-up date and a termination date. The start-up date is the same as the start-up date of the funding.

### **Section 5.4      Infrastructure**

Candidates must have at their disposal the infrastructure required for the completion of the research project. Candidates who receive external funding or are employed outside NMBU a contract is entered into between the institution and the external party for the individual research project. This contract must exist at the time when the decision to admit the candidate in question is taken.

## **Section 6      PhD contract and education plan, contract period and termination before the end of the contract period**

### **Section 6.1      PhD contract and education plan**

(1) Admission to the PhD programme will be formalised, using a standard form, at the latest six (6) months after start-up by means of a written contract which includes an education plan. The contract is signed by the PhD candidate, the supervisory team and the faculty to which the PhD candidate is affiliated, and also by external institutions if relevant. The PhD contract and the education plan are prepared by the PhD candidate in collaboration with the supervisory team.

(2) The contract governs the parties' responsibilities, rights and obligations, and covers funding, supervision, participation in the academic community at NMBU, reporting, publication and ownership of the results. The contract must ensure that the PhD candidate is integrated in an active research community and must make provision for the PhD programme to be completed within the period of the contract.

(3) The contract must include:

- a. A funding plan
- b. Copyright or intellectual property agreements if relevant

(4) The faculty approves the PhD contract and the education plan. If significant changes are made to the agreed conditions, a new PhD contract and/or education plan must be prepared and approved by the faculty where the candidate is affiliated.

### **Section 6.2      Contract period**

(1) The nominal length of study of the PhD programme is three (3) years of full-time study (cf. section 2). The maximum permitted period for completing the PhD programme is seven (7) years from the start-up date to the submission of the thesis for evaluation, after a deduction has been made for statutory or agreed leave. The contract period shall be indicated in the contract.

(2) The faculty can extend the contract period on application by the PhD candidate stating the grounds for the extension. Any extension of the contract period must be related to the rights of employees or clarified in particular in relation to the candidate's funding base. If an extension is granted, the faculty can stipulate further conditions.

(3) After the expiry of the contract period, the parties' rights and obligations pursuant to the PhD contract lapse. Nevertheless the candidate may apply for permission to submit the thesis for evaluation for the PhD degree.

### **Section 6.3 Termination before the agreed completion date**

#### *(1) Voluntary termination*

The candidate and the faculty may agree to terminate the PhD education before the agreed completion date. In the event of such termination, the parties shall enter into a written agreement regulating issues such as employment, funding, and rights to research results. In the event of voluntary termination on the basis of the candidate's desire to change projects, the candidate must reapply for admission on the basis of the new project. An application stating the grounds must be sent to the faculty, which will reach a decision in the case.

#### *(2) Involuntary termination*

a. The faculty may decide to terminate the PhD education before the agreed completion date. Such a decision may be taken if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- i. A significant delay in completion of the required coursework due to circumstances which the candidate has control.
- ii. Repeated or significant failure on the part of the candidate to fulfil obligations regarding information, meet commitments or report on progress.
- iii. Delay in the progress of the research project of a kind that gives rise to reasonable doubt about the candidate's ability to complete the project within the agreed time. To qualify as grounds for non-voluntary termination, the delay must be attributable to circumstances over which the candidate has control.
- iv. Breach of the guidelines for research ethics applicable to the subject area, including cheating, pursuant to section 4.7 of the Act relating to universities and university colleges, section 4.7, and to the Act on ethics and integrity in research.
- v. Conduct on the part of the candidate that violates the necessary level of trust between NMBU and the candidate during the course of the education, including any illegal activities related to the PhD programme.

b. PhD candidates employed by NMBU may be dismissed from their employment when reasonable grounds exist that affect the situation of either the institution or the employee, cf. Civil Service Act.

## **I. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Section 7 Academic supervision**

(1) Work on the doctoral thesis shall be given individual supervision. The supervisory team must consist of at least two researchers, one of whom shall be appointed as the principal supervisor. The supervisors must possess a doctoral degree or equivalent competence in the relevant field and be actively involved in research.<sup>1</sup> The principal supervisor must have previous experience of or training in academic supervision of PhD candidates. The principal supervisor has the main academic and administrative responsibility for the PhD candidate's education and will be the candidate's primary contact person. He/she should normally be an employee of the faculty to which the PhD candidate is affiliated. In special cases an external employee may be appointed as the principal supervisor. This appointment must be based on an agreement between the institution at which the person in question is employed and NMBU. If the faculty appoints an external principal supervisor, a co-supervisor from the faculty to which the PhD candidate is affiliated shall be appointed.

(2) The main supervisor and the candidate him/herself shall be responsible for maintaining regular contact with the candidate's supervisors. The supervisory team has joint responsibility for the academic follow-up of the PhD candidate and for ensuring that the candidate participates in an active research community with senior researchers and other PhD candidates. Supervisors have a duty to keep themselves informed of the progress of the candidate's work and to assess the work in relation to the project description. Supervisors have a duty to follow up conditions of an academic nature that may cause delay in the completion of the PhD education to ensure that the education can be completed within the nominal length of study.

(3) Supervisors shall advise on the formulation and delimitation of the topic and related research questions. They shall discuss and assess hypotheses and research methods as well as results and their

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter of 25 June 2012 the Ministry of Education and Research made it clear that senior lecturers and docents are equal in position to associate professors and professors, but that the former positions have a different content. This means that senior lecturers and docents cannot serve as PhD supervisors or sit on adjudication committees for PhD theses

interpretation, and shall also discuss the form and presentation of the thesis, including its structure, linguistic form, documentation etc. Supervisors shall guide the candidate towards scientific literature and data in libraries, archives, data collections etc. The supervisors shall also advise the candidate on matters of research ethics related to the thesis.

(4) The PhD candidate or supervisor may request the faculty to which the candidate has been admitted to appoint a new supervisor for the candidate. The supervisor may not withdraw from the position until a new supervisor has been appointed. The faculty is responsible for immediately designating a new supervisor or supervisors in the event of long-term illness, leave of absence and the like.

(5) If disputes between the PhD candidate and the supervisor cannot be settled amicably by the parties, they may be brought before the faculty. If after discussion the parties are unable to come to an agreement on how the dispute can be settled, the supervisor or the candidate can request that the supervision agreement be altered. A request to terminate the contract must be sent to the faculty, with a copy to the other party in the case.

## **Section 8      Required coursework**

### **Section 8.1      Objectives, content and scope**

(1) NMBU is responsible for ensuring that the required coursework, together with the work on the thesis, results in education at a high academic level and a learning outcome that is in compliance with the descriptions in the Norwegian qualifications framework. The programme shall be in accordance with international standards and shall include the completion of a work of scientific research and training in academic dissemination as well as an introduction to research ethics, the philosophy of science and scientific methods.

(2) If NMBU itself does not organise all the required coursework, arrangements shall be made to ensure that the PhD candidate is given appropriate training at other institutions or units that provide accredited PhD education.

(3) For courses where no suitable tuition is available, an independent course at PhD level may be approved as part of the required coursework.

(4) The required coursework shall include courses at PhD or master's degree level equivalent to 30-60 credits (ECTS), in accordance with more detailed specifications from the faculty.

(5) A course in research ethics and the philosophy of science giving a minimum of 5 credits shall be included in the required coursework.

(6) Elements that shall be included in the required coursework should not be older than two years on the start-up date. However, work that forms part of the veterinary diploma education and the veterinary studies research programme can be accepted.

(7) Approval of the required coursework is conditional on documentation that the PhD candidate has acquired the necessary academic expertise.

### **Section 8.2      Candidates' rights during leave of absence**

In accordance with the National Insurance Act and the routines of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, PhD candidates on parental leave from the doctoral programme may continue to follow tuition and sit examinations in courses that shall form part of the required coursework.

## **Section 9      Quality assurance measures**

### **Section 9.1      Measures to detect and follow up missing, progress reporting**

(1) NMBU's quality assurance of the PhD education includes measures to detect lack of progress in the required coursework or in the work on the thesis, and deficiencies in supervision. NMBU's faculties must have routines for follow-up of the deficiencies detected.

(2) During the contract period the PhD candidate must submit annual written reports on the progress in the PhD programme directly to the faculty. An updated progress plan must be sent annually to the faculty. The reports are to be written on a standard form and shall be treated confidentially when the nature of the information so requires.

## **Section 9.2      Compulsory seminars, Midway assessment**

(1) The quality assurance of the PhD education shall include a minimum of three fixed seminars during the period of instruction: an introductory seminar, a midway assessment seminar and a final seminar.

(2) Special importance is attributed to the midway seminar:

- a. The midway assessment of the doctoral degree work shall be conducted when the candidate has completed a maximum of two years of the PhD study.
- b. The candidate must present his/her work and be evaluated by a group of at least two people appointed by the faculty. The evaluation group must consist of one member of the supervisory team and one member from the faculty in question or an external member.
- c. The evaluation team must assess the academic status and progress of the work on the doctoral thesis, and must report its findings on a standard form to the candidate, the supervisory team and the faculty.
- d. If the supervisory team reports material weaknesses in the research work, the faculty must implement measures to rectify the situation in collaboration with the supervisory team and the candidate.

## **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 summarises 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.

(6) NMBU guidelines for the use of author addresses must be the basis for the inclusion of addresses in scientific publications that is part of the doctoral thesis.

(7) The thesis shall be written in either English or Norwegian. A PhD candidate who wishes to use another language must apply for permission to do so upon admission, cf. section 5.1.

### **Section 10.2      Publication of results being a part of the doctoral work**

No restrictions can be made on publications that are part of the PhD work. Postponement of publications shall be agreed upon in advance. Publication may be postponed if the PhD is fully or partly funded by an external party in order to allow the external party to make decisions relating to patents/commercialisation. The agreed postponement of the time of publication shall not exceed four (4) months.



### **Section 10.3    *Rights to the use of own results***

Unless otherwise agreed, the PhD candidate's right to use his/her own results, the utilisation of patentable inventions, copyright etc. are regulated by the Act respecting the right to employees' inventions and by NMBU's own regulations concerning employees' rights.

### **Section 10.4    *Work not eligible for evaluation***

(1) A work that has been approved as the basis for previous examinations is not eligible for evaluation unless it forms a minor part of a thesis consisting of several related pieces of work. Work forming part of the veterinary diploma education and the veterinary studies research programme can, however, be approved. Data, analyses or methods from previous degrees may be used as the basis for further work on the PhD project.

(2) Published papers cannot be accepted as part of a doctoral thesis if the publication date precedes the candidate's date of admission by more than five (5) years. The faculty may grant an exemption from this requirement if extraordinary circumstances so indicate.

## **Section 11    *Obligation to report research results with commercial potential***

(1) The regulation of the rights of the collaborating institutions must be stipulated in an agreement at the commencement of the PhD programme. NMBU's prevailing regulations shall form the basis of the obligation of PhD candidates employed by NMBU to report research results with commercial potential.

(2) When a PhD candidate has an external employer, a corresponding obligation to report shall be stipulated in an agreement between the institutions, the PhD candidate and the external employer. When a PhD candidate does not have an employer, a corresponding obligation to report shall be incorporated in the admission contract between the institution and the PhD candidate.

## **II.    COMPLETION**

### **Section 12    *Evaluation***

#### **Section 12.1    *Basis for evaluation***

The PhD degree is awarded on the basis of:

- a. approved completion of the required coursework
- b. an approved doctoral thesis
- c. an approved trial lecture on a specified topic
- d. an approved public defence of the doctoral thesis (disputation).

#### **Section 12.2    *Time from submission of the doctoral thesis to the public defence***

Normally no more than three (3) months shall elapse between the date of submission of the thesis and the public defence. The principal supervisor is responsible for informing the department that the submission of the thesis will shortly take place so that the necessary preparations can begin.

### **Section 13    *Submission***

#### **Section 13.1    *Submission of the thesis***

(1) The required course work must be approved by the faculty before applying to submit the doctoral thesis.

(2) An application for evaluation of the doctoral thesis shall be submitted to the faculty on the prescribed form. The application must include a declaration that the doctoral thesis has not been submitted for evaluation to any other institution, and a written statement by the principal supervisor which confirms his/her recommendation of the doctoral thesis evaluation. The following items must be attached to the application:

- a. Five bound copies or stapled copies of the thesis
- b. Verification of approval of the required coursework
- c. Declaration of co-authorship by all co-authors
- d. [A confirmation receipt of the submission of thesis in Brage](#)



(3) In addition, an electronic version of the thesis must be submitted (pdf formatted) via NMBU's institutional open archive, "Brage".

(4) The thesis shall be made publicly available no later than two weeks before the date set for the public defence, cf. section 17.2.

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### **Section 13.2 Processing the application**

An application that does not satisfy the requirements set out in section 13.1 shall be rejected. The faculty may reject an application for evaluation of the doctoral thesis if it is clear that the thesis is not of sufficiently high academic quality to be approved for the doctoral degree. In other cases the application will be submitted to the evaluation committee for appraisal.

## **Section 14 Appointment of the evaluation committee**

(1) The faculty shall submit a proposal on the composition of the evaluation committee. The proposal must explain the reasoning behind the selection of members and indicate how the committee as a whole covers the subject area(s) addressed in the thesis.

(2) The proposal for the composition of the evaluation committee cannot be submitted until the required coursework has been completed and approved.

(3) The rector appoints a committee of at least three experts to evaluate the thesis. The rules on impartiality contained in the Public Administration Act apply to the members of the committee.

(4) Supervisors or co-authors cannot be members of the evaluation committee.

(5) The evaluation committee shall be composed so that:

- a. The members together have competence covering the subject area(s) addressed in the thesis
- b. Both genders are represented, if possible
- c. Two of the members have no association with NMBU, and at least one of these members should represent a prestigious foreign institution
- d. One of the members must be employed at NMBU in a permanent position, and will also act as the committee's [leader and coordinator](#)
- e. All members hold a doctoral degree or equivalent academic qualifications.

(6) The PhD candidate is entitled to submit written comments on the composition of the committee before the proposal is forwarded to the rector.

(7) In the event of any changes in the composition of the committee, for example in the case of illness or leave of absence, the rector will immediately appoint a new member in accordance with a recommendation from the faculty.

## **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. An overall assessment shall be made and strengths and weakness 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*. 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. If the committee permits a reworking of the thesis, a new deadline shall be set from the date of the re-submission of the thesis.

(2) The report's conclusion must clearly state whether the committee:

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.

(4) The faculty informs the PhD candidate of the evaluation committee's report, and he/she is given a time limit of ten (10) working days to present written comments to the report. If the PhD candidate does not wish to put forward comments, the faculty must be notified of this in writing as soon as possible. Any comments must be forwarded to the faculty. The faculty shall reach a decision on the case (cf. section 16).

(5) If there is dissent in the committee, the case will be submitted to the [Faculty Board](#) which can:

- a. Make a decision without further evaluation
- b. Request further clarification from the evaluation committee
- c. [Suggest](#) two new experts to provide individual statements on the thesis
- d. [Suggest](#) that two new experts shall be included in an extended evaluation committee.

[The Faculty Board](#) makes a decision in the case on the basis of the report as well as other comments from the PhD candidate and any statements submitted by the two new experts.

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## **Section 15.3 Correction of formal errors in the thesis**

(1) A submitted thesis may not be withdrawn before a final decision has been made as to whether it merits a public defence.

(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.

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## Section 16 Processing of the evaluation committee's recommendation

The faculty decides whether the doctoral thesis is worthy of a public defence on the basis of the evaluation committee's report and any written comments submitted by the candidate.

### Section 16.1 Unanimous recommendation

(1) If the committee's recommendation is unanimous, and the faculty bases its decision on this recommendation, the faculty will make its decision in accordance with the recommendation.

(2) If the faculty finds that there are reasonable grounds to doubt whether the committee's unanimous report should be endorsed, the faculty itself shall seek further clarification from the evaluation committee and/or the rector shall appoint two new experts to give individual statements on the thesis. Such clarifications or individual statements must be presented to the PhD candidate who is given the opportunity to comment. The faculty makes the final decision on the case on the basis of the committee's recommendation and the additional statements.

### Section 16.2 Split recommendation

(1) If the committee's recommendation is not unanimous and the faculty decides to base its decision on the majority recommendation, the faculty will then make the final decision in accordance with the majority recommendation.

(2) If the committee delivers a split recommendation and the faculty is considering basing its final decision on the minority recommendation, the faculty may seek further clarification from the evaluation committee and/or appoint two new experts to give individual statements on the thesis. Such supplementary clarifications or individual statements must be submitted to the PhD candidate, who is given the opportunity to make comments. If both the new experts concur with the original majority recommendation, this must be complied with. The candidate shall be informed of the result after the statements of the two new experts have been considered.

## Section 17 Publicising the thesis

### Section 17.1 Requirements for the printed thesis

Once the thesis has been found worthy of defence, *it must be printed in the approved format. The thesis must be printed exactly the same as the submitted version. However, approved corrections must be included. . A list of the approved corrections (errata list), cf. section 15.3, must be included at the end of the printed version of the thesis.* The PhD candidate shall submit *eight (8) printed copies* of the thesis to the university administration, in addition to the number specified by the faculty.

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### Section 17.2 Publicising

(1) The thesis and the abstract must be made publicly available no later than two (2) weeks before the date set for the public defence, and this is the responsibility of the faculty. The thesis must be made publicly available in the form in which it was submitted for evaluation, but with any errata rectified, cf. section 15.3.

(2) No restrictions may be placed on the doctoral thesis being made publicly available, with the exception of a previously agreed postponement of the public release date. An external party is not entitled to demand that the whole or parts of the PhD thesis be exempt from public access, cf. section 6.1.

*(3) NMBU reserves a non-exclusive right to archive and publish the thesis via NMBU's open archive. The right means that the thesis must be filed and published in its entirety, as one document with all parts of the thesis included. NMBU shall not publish any parts of the thesis separated from the other parts. The PhD candidate may reserve the right to postpone the publication in the open archive for up to one year from the disputation date.*

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(4) When publishing a PhD thesis, PhD candidates must comply with the prevailing guidelines on crediting the institutions, cf. section 10.

## **Section 18     Trial lecture and defence of the thesis (disputation)**

### **Section 18.1     Trial lecture**

(1) Prior to the public defence, the PhD candidate must give a trial lecture on a specified subject. The purpose is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge beyond the topic of the doctoral thesis and to convey this knowledge in a lecture situation. The lecture must last 45 minutes. The academic level of the lecture must be suited to master degree students or students in the final phase of a five-year programme of professional study.

(2) The title of the trial lecture will be proposed by the evaluation committee and announced to the candidate ten (10) working days before the trial lecture. The topic should not be directly linked to the specific topic of the thesis but is normally intended to give a broader overview of the subject area. The trial lecture shall be held in English or Norwegian unless approval has been given to use another language.

(3) If the faculty decides that the trial lecture should be held in connection with the public defence, the evaluation committee assigns the topic of the trial lecture and also assesses the lecture. If the trial lecture is not held in connection with the public defence, the faculty may appoint a separate committee to determine the topic of the trial lecture. At least one member of the evaluation committee shall then be appointed as a member of the committee which is to assess the trial lecture.

(4) The committee is responsible for determining whether the trial lecture is approved. If the committee recommends that the trial lecture is not approved, reasons for this must be given. The trial lecture must be approved before the public defence of the thesis can be held.

### **Section 18.2     Public defence of the thesis (disputation)**

(1) The public defence of the thesis shall take place after the delivery and approval of the trial lecture, and within two (2) months of the institution finding that the thesis merits a public defence. The time and location of the public defence must be announced at least ten working days in advance together with information about how the thesis has been publicised.

(2) The public defence shall be held in English or Norwegian unless the evaluation committee approves the use of another language. There should normally be two ordinary opponents who are also members of the evaluation committee.

(3) The public defence shall be chaired by the dean or by the person appointed by the dean. The chair of the public defence provides a brief account of the submission and evaluation of the thesis, and the assessment of the trial lecture. Then the candidate explains the objectives and findings of the doctoral thesis. After both opponents have concluded their questioning, members of the audience are given the opportunity to comment *ex auditorio*. One of the opponents concludes the questioning and the chair of the public defence concludes the defence proceedings.

(4) The public defence shall consist of a scholarly discussion between the opponents and the candidate on the formulation of the research questions, the methodological, empirical and theoretical basis, documentation and form of presentation. Special emphasis should be put on testing whether important conclusions drawn by the candidate in the research work are tenable or not. The research questions which the opponents choose to pursue need not be limited to those discussed in the committee's report on the thesis.

(5) The evaluation committee shall submit a recommendation to the faculty regarding its assessment of the defence of the thesis. The recommendation shall include an assessment of the level of the thesis in relation to international standards in the subject, and shall reach a conclusion as to whether the defence of the thesis shall be approved or not. If the defence is not approved, reasons must be given.

## **Section 19 Approval of the trial lecture and the defence of the doctoral thesis**

(1) The faculty makes the decision on approval of the trial lecture and the defence of the doctoral thesis on the basis of the recommendation of the evaluation committee.

(2) If the evaluation committee does not recommend that the trial lecture be approved, a new trial lecture may be held. The new trial lecture must be given on a new topic and at the latest six (6) months after the first attempt. A new trial lecture can only be held once. The lecture should if possible be assessed by the original evaluation committee.

(3) If the public defence is not approved, the candidate may give a new defence of the thesis once. The faculty will decide the date of the new disputation. This will if possible be evaluated by the original evaluation committee.

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

(1) On the basis of the faculty's report that the required coursework, the thesis, the trial lecture and the public defence have been approved, the **rector** shall confer the degree of philosophiae doctor on the candidate.

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(2) The diploma shall be issued in line with the Naional guidelines for PhD diplomas, and disclose information about the title of the thesis, the topic of the trial lecture, approval of the courses required, and the names of supervisors and the members of the evaluation committee. The diploma is signed by the rector and the director of research.

## **Section 21 Diploma supplement**

The institution shall issue a doctoral diploma supplement in line with the prevailing guidelines for this.

## **Section 22 Joint degrees and cotutelle agreements**

NMBU may reach agreement with one or more Norwegian or foreign universities on collaboration in the form of joint degrees or cotutelle agreements.

### **Section 22.1 Joint degrees**

(1) The term 'joint degree' is defined as a collaboration between several institutions in which the cooperating institutions have joint responsibility for admission, academic supervision, the conferral of the degree and other elements described in these regulations. Collaboration is normally organised in the form of a consortium and is regulated by an agreement between the consortium members. A joint diploma for the completed joint degree is awarded in the form of: a) a diploma issued by the consortium members as a group, b) a diploma from each member of the consortium, or a combination of a) and b).

(2) Joint degrees shall normally only be offered if a well-established and stable academic collaboration has already been established between the institution and at least one of the consortium members. **Rector** will determine more detailed guidelines for collaboration on joint degrees, including templates for collaboration agreements.

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### **§ 22.2 Cotutelle agreements**

The term 'cotutelle agreement' is defined as the joint academic supervision of PhD candidates, and collaboration on the education of PhD candidates. A cotutelle agreement must be entered into for each candidate and must be based on stable, academic institutional cooperation.

### **Section 22.3 Requirements for joint degrees and cotutelle agreements**

(1) Admission requirements, the requirement that the thesis must be made publicly available, and the requirement that the public defence must be evaluated by an impartial committee cannot be waived.

(2) Agreements on joint degrees and cotutelle agreements must as a minimum regulate admission, funding, the required coursework, the supervision, the stay at the respective institutions, reporting requirements, the language used in the thesis, the design, evaluation, conferring of the degree, the diploma and rights to results. The agreement must be signed by the rector. The PhD education at the collaborating institution must also have a nominal length of study of three years. The candidate must be admitted to both institutions.

## **III. APPEALS, ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 23 Appeal**

#### **Section 23.1 Appeal against the rejection of an application for admission, appeal against a decision to terminate a student's admission rights, and appeal against the rejection of an application for recognition of parts of the required coursework**

Rejection of an application for admission, a decision on an enforced termination and rejection of an application for recognition of parts of the required coursework may be appealed pursuant to the provisions of section 28 and following of [the Act relating to universities and university colleges section 4-13](#).

#### **Section 23.2 An appeal against grading of an examination forming part of the required coursework**

The grading of examinations taken as part of the required coursework may be appealed by requesting a reassessment of the examination grade, cf. section 5-3 of the Act relating to universities and university colleges section 5-3. A complaint against procedural errors in connection with examinations can be submitted to NMBU's Appeals Committee, cf. section 5.2 of the Act relating to universities and university colleges section 5-2. A suspicion of cheating in the doctoral thesis or an attempt to cheat in the required coursework must be handled in accordance with NMBU's established routines for this and in accordance with [the Act relating to universities and university colleges section 4-13](#).

#### **Section 23.3 An appeal against the rejection of an application for evaluation, non-approval of a doctoral thesis, trial lecture or public defence**

(1) Rejection of an application for evaluation of a doctoral thesis and a decision of non-approval of a doctoral thesis, trial lecture or public defence may be appealed pursuant to the [Act relating to universities and university colleges section 4-13](#) and following of the Public Administration Act section 28.

(2) If the faculty or the appeals body finds reasons for it individual experts or a committee may be appointed to conduct an assessment of the evaluation that was carried out and of the criteria on which the evaluation was based, or to conduct a new or supplementary expert evaluation.

#### **§ 23.4 Deadline for appeal and proceedings**

(1) [Deadline for appeal is three \(3\) weeks from the date the faculty's decision has been received.](#)

(2) A substantiated appeal must be sent to the faculty, [which can uphold, rescind or change the decision if the appeal is found to be justified](#). If the faculty does not uphold the appeal, it will be submitted to NMBU's Appeals Committee for a final decision. The appeals body can review all aspects of the decision appealed.

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## **Section 24      Entry into force**

These regulations enter in force from and including 01.01.2015. [The revisions of these regulations enter into force 01.03.2017](#). Concurrently with this, the Regulations of 5 March 2009 for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD.) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and the Regulations of 15 December 2011 for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD.) at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science are repealed.

## **§ 25      Transitional provisions**

On the entry into force of these regulations, any candidate admitted to the PhD education pursuant to the regulations of 5 March 2009 for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD.) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and the regulations of 15 December 2011 for the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD.) at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, retains the rights granted in the aforementioned regulations if they benefit the candidate in question. Section 15 applies to candidates who submit their thesis from and including 01.01.2015.