

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

Laid down by the Board of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) on 30 January 2020 pursuant to Act No 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to universities and university colleges Sections 3-3, 3-9 and 4-13.

In force from 1 July 2020.

*This English translation is for information purposes only. For all legal purposes, the original document in Norwegian is the authoritative version.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS**

### **Section 1 Applicability**

(1) These Regulations apply to all education leading to the degree Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU).

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

(1) NMBU shall offer a PhD education of high international standard in line with recognised scientific and ethical principles. The education shall qualify candidates for research and other work that requires a high level of scientific and analytical thinking.

(2) The objective of the PhD education is to give knowledge, skills and expertise in line with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework. The PhD education is organised in programmes with a nominal length of three years' full-time study including a required coursework component of at least 30 credits (ECTS). The most important component of the PhD education is an independent research work, or a combined research and development work carried out with regular supervision.

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

- approved completion of the required coursework
- an approved academic thesis
- an approved trial lecture on a specified topic
- an approved public defence of the thesis (disputation)

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

(1) The University Board has the overall responsibility for the PhD education at NMBU. The University Board itself decides regarding the establishment and discontinuation of PhD programmes. In cases where decision-making authority is vested in NMBU, decisions are made by the Rector or the body or person authorised by the Rector to do so.

(2) The faculties are responsible for implementing and following up the PhD education. The faculty responsible for a PhD programme is referred to hereinafter as 'the Faculty'. In cases where decision-making authority is vested in the Faculty, decisions are made by the Dean or the body authorised by the Dean to do so.

(3) The Faculty must have a programme council that is responsible for academic management and for a PhD programme overall. The programme council acts on the authorisation of and advises the Dean.

(4) The Faculty may adopt supplementary provisions to the PhD Regulations provided they are not in conflict with the PhD Regulations.

(5) The Research Committee at NMBU acts on the authorisation of and advises the Rector, and has particular responsibility for initiating measures to improve the quality of the PhD education, cf. 'Guidelines for the Research Committee at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences'.

### **Section 4 Quality assurance**

All relevant levels at NMBU are responsible for ensuring compliance with the quality system for educational activities, cf. Section 9.

## **II. ADMISSION**

### **Section 5 Admission**

#### **Section 5-1 General provisions**

(1) The Faculty is the admission authority for its own PhD programme(s).

(2) The Faculty may set criteria for ranking qualified applicants, and criteria for limiting the number of admissions to a PhD programme based on an assessment of the potential relevance of PhD projects to the research environments, the Faculty's PhD supervision capacity or other limiting factors. The criteria must be publicly available.

(3) The Faculty may require that candidates with an external employer stay for a set time in a relevant academic environment at NMBU (duty of residency).

(4) The necessary infrastructure for carrying out the PhD project must be available for the PhD candidate.

### **Section 5-2 Admission requirements – education and English language requirements**

(1) To be admitted to a PhD programme, an applicant must have a relevant academic education corresponding to a five-year Norwegian second cycle degree, with a learning outcome corresponding to the descriptions in the Norwegian Qualification Framework. The requirement<sup>1</sup> is a master's degree with a scope of at least 120 credits (ECTS) that is based on a bachelor's degree of minimum 180 credits (ECTS), or a *cand.med.vet.* degree, or an integrated master's degree with a scope of minimum 300 credits (ECTS) where 120 credits (ECTS) are at master's degree level.

(2) The applicant must be able to document a strong academic background from previous studies. The Faculty may adopt further admission requirements based on criteria that are openly available. The Faculty to which an applicant applies for admission can require the applicant to complete specific courses and/or pass specific tests before admission.

(3) Documented proficiency in written and oral English is required. This requirement can be met in one of the following ways:

- a. English at upper secondary level 1 from a Norwegian upper secondary school (140 hours) with a grade of 4 or higher, or in-depth English from upper secondary level 2 or 3 with a pass grade, or an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.
- b. English language test:
  - i. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a result of at least 580 points for the paper-based test (PBT) or 92 points for the internet-based test (IBT), or
  - ii. IELTS Academic Test with a score of at least 7.0, or
  - iii. Cambridge Certificate, C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency, with a grade of C or better, or
  - iv. Pearson Test of English (PTE Academic) with a score of at least 65 points.
- c. Completion of at least one year of university studies in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia. A completed bachelor's degree, or minimum one completed year of a master's degree programme, with English as the language of instruction, in a Nordic country.

English skills at a level corresponding to that described in a.–c. that are documented in other ways, may in special cases be approved by the Faculty based on an individual assessment of the applicant's documentation.

### **Section 5-3 Admission requirements – funding requirements**

Funding for the entire PhD education must be documented. If the funding is dependent on appointment to a PhD position at NMBU or with an external party, an employment agreement is required for admission.

### **Section 5-4 Application for admission**

(1) An application for a PhD position at NMBU is at the same time an application for admission to a PhD programme. The application for admission must have such form and content, and be accompanied by such documentation, as NMBU prescribes.

(2) Applicants with funding from a source other than a PhD position at NMBU must send their application to the Faculty, in the form prescribed by NMBU, within two months of the start date for funding of the PhD education. The application must, as a minimum, include:

- a. Documentation of the education on which admission will be based and of English language skills, cf. Section 5-2.
- b. Citizenship documented by a passport if the applicant is not a Norwegian national.
- c. Documentation of full funding for the whole admission period, cf. Section 5-3; a funding plan and agreement(s) on external<sup>2</sup> funding.
- d. A project outline including an academic description of the project and a progress plan.
- e. A description of any special needs for academic and material resources, such as access to infrastructure required to carry out the project and, if relevant, an agreement concerning this with an external party.

<sup>1</sup> The requirement in terms of Norwegian education

<sup>2</sup> Non NMBU funding

- f. Proposed supervisors and affiliation to an academic environment.
- g. Information about the planned main place of work.
- h. Information about any relevant matters relating to intellectual property rights.
- i. An account for possible legal or ethical issues that the project might give rise to.
- j. Information about whether the project is dependent on permission from research ethics committees, permission to process personal data or other permissions. If possible, such permissions should be enclosed with the application.

### **Section 5-5 Consideration of applications and admissions decisions**

(1) Applications for admission from persons who have also applied for a PhD position at NMBU are to be considered in parallel with the application for the position. Other applications for admission will normally be considered within four weeks of being received.

(2) The Faculty considers and decides on admission based on an overall assessment of the application. To consider an application, the Faculty may require the applicant to submit any lacking documentation. A prerequisite, but not a guarantee, for admission is that the requirements in Sections 5-2 and 5-3 are met.

(3) Admission decisions must state how the funding requirement will be met, cf. Section 5-3, state the appointed supervisors, if relevant describe any duty of residency, assign responsibility for dealing with special needs outlined in the application, and state the start-up and end date for the contract period. The start-up date for admission must be the same as the start-up date for the funding. Any reservations made and deadlines for fulfilling them must be clearly stated in the admission decision.

(4) An application for admission is to be rejected if:

- a. Agreements with an external third party are an obstacle to publication and public defence of the thesis.
- b. Agreements with an external third party are in conflict with NMBU's *Guidelines for Administration of Intellectual Property Rights and Physical Material in Third Party Relationships*.
- c. On the application date, less than one year's full-time work remains to be done on the project that is intended to lead to the PhD degree. Exemptions can only be granted from this requirement for applicants from student research programmes.

## **Section 6 PhD contract, education plan, data management plan, contract period, and termination before the agreed time**

### **Section 6-1 The PhD contract, individual education plan and data management plan**

(1) Admission to the PhD programme is formalised in a written agreement (NMBU's PhD contract), accompanied by an individual education plan and a data management plan in the form prescribed by NMBU, no later than four months after the start-up date (as defined in Section 5-5 (3)). The PhD contract, the individual education plan and the data management plan must be filled in by the PhD candidate in cooperation with the supervisors.

(2) The PhD contract is entered into between the PhD candidate, the supervisors and the Faculty, and any non-NMBU parties involved. The PhD contract regulates the parties' rights and obligations during the contract period, including funding, supervision, reporting, publication and ownership of the results. In the case of cooperation with external parties, NMBU may require that a cooperation agreement be signed before the PhD contract is entered into.

(3) The individual education plan must include a project description and progress plan for the work on the PhD project, a plan for the required coursework, a publication plan and a plan for stays at other institutions.

(4) The PhD contract, individual education plan and data management plan must be approved by the Faculty. Significant changes to the PhD contract or the individual education plan must also be approved by the Faculty.

### **Section 6-2 Contract period (study period)**

(1) The contract period must be such that it is possible to complete the PhD programme within the nominal length of the programme, and it is normally set to three years without required work duties or four years with required work duties corresponding to 25 % of full-time work. The PhD contract must state the contract period which must, for PhD fellows employed at NMBU or externally, be identical to the agreed employment period. For other PhD candidates, the Faculty stipulates the contract period in consultation with the parties to the contract.

(2) The maximum permitted length of study is six years from the start-up date until submission of the thesis for evaluation, after deducting statutory interruptions or agreed leaves of absence.

(3) For PhD candidates with statutory interruptions during the contract period, the Faculty will (without the candidate having to apply) extend the contract period correspondingly when the candidate provides documentation for the statutory interruptions.

(4) The Faculty may extend the contract period in cases other than those set out in Section 6-2 (3), based on a reasoned application from the PhD candidate. Any extension must be clarified in relation to the candidate's funding base. If an extension is granted, the Faculty may set further conditions.

(5) On expiry of the contract period, the PhD candidate's right to study at NMBU expires, as does his/her right to supervision and access to the university's infrastructure. The PhD candidate is nevertheless entitled to apply to submit his/her thesis for evaluation for the PhD degree.

### ***Section 6-3 Termination before the agreed completion date, cancellation of the PhD contract***

#### **(1) Voluntary termination**

The PhD candidate and the Faculty can agree to terminate the PhD education before the agreed completion date. In case of voluntary termination of the PhD education, it must be stipulated in writing how matters relating to the employment relationship, funding, rights to results etc. will be settled. In the event of voluntary termination because the PhD candidate wishes to change projects and/or PhD programmes, the PhD candidate must apply to the relevant faculty for admission based on the new project or the wish to transfer to another programme. Transferring to a non-supervised degree (Dr. Philos.) is deemed to be equivalent to voluntary termination.

#### **(2) Enforced termination**

- a. Pursuant to the University and University Colleges Act Section 4-13 (1), the Dean can decide on an enforced termination of the PhD education, in the event of scientific misconduct as defined in the Research Ethics Act Section 8 second paragraph.
- b. Pursuant to the University and University Colleges Act Section 4-13 (2), the Dean can decide on an enforced termination of the PhD education, if the PhD candidate, to a significant extent, fails to fulfil his/her obligations under the PhD contract. A decision to enforce involuntary termination can be made if one or more of the following situations arise:
  - i. A significant delay in completion of the required coursework, due to circumstances over 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 leading to reasonable doubt on the candidate's ability to complete the project within the agreed time. To qualify as grounds for enforced termination, the delay must be attributable to circumstances over which the candidate has control.
  - iv. 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.
- c. The PhD candidate must be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the matter before a decision on involuntary termination is made.

### ***Section 6-4 Termination with and without notice***

A PhD candidate can be dismissed from his/her position when this is justified by circumstances relating to the organisation or the candidate, cf. the Government Employee Act Sections 19 and 20, or dismissed without notice pursuant to Section 26.

## **III. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Section 7 Academic supervision**

#### ***Section 7-1 Right to supervision and affiliation to an academic environment***

Work on the PhD project is to be carried out under individual supervision. The Faculty and supervisors must together ensure that the PhD candidate is included in a relevant, active academic environment consisting of senior researchers and other PhD candidates.

### **Section 7-2 Appointment of supervisors**

(1) The PhD candidate is to have at least two supervisors, one of whom must be appointed as the main supervisor. The supervisors are appointed by the Faculty. All supervisors must hold a doctoral degree in a relevant academic field and be working actively as researchers. The impartiality rules set out in the Public Administration Act Chapter II 'Concerning disqualification', Section 6–10, apply to supervisors. The main supervisor has the principal responsibility for the academic- and progress-related following up of the PhD and is to be the candidate's primary contact person. The co-supervisors are experts in the field who provide supervision and share academic responsibility for the candidate.

(2) The main supervisor must be an employee of NMBU and have previous experience or training in serving as supervisor for PhD candidates. When academic considerations specifically require, an external main supervisor may be appointed. Reasons must be given, and the appointment must be based on a written agreement between the main supervisor's employer and NMBU. A co-supervisor from the Faculty must be appointed if the Faculty appoints an external main supervisor.

### **Section 7-3 The content and scope of supervision**

(1) The values conveyed as principles in NMBU's Ethical Guidelines shall form the basis for the supervisory relationship.

(2) The supervisors are to give advice on formulating and delimiting the topic and research questions, discuss and assess hypotheses, methodology, data collection and data management, discuss results and their interpretation, discuss the structure and completion of the presentation, including the outline, linguistic aspects and documentation, and guide the candidate towards scientific literature and basic data. The supervisors must give the PhD candidate guidance on matters of research ethics relating to the PhD project and the thesis.

(3) The PhD candidate and supervisors are to be in regular contact. Contact frequency must be stated in the annual progress report, cf. Section 9-1 (2). The PhD candidate and supervisors are mutually obliged to keep informed on the progress of the work and assess it in relation to the progress plan. The supervisors are required to follow up academic matters that can lead to delays in the candidate's completion of the PhD education, thereby ensuring that the education can be completed within the nominal length of study.

### **Section 7-4 Changes to the supervisory team, disputes**

(1) A PhD candidate or supervisor may, together or separately, ask the Faculty to appoint a new supervisor for the PhD candidate. The supervisor may not withdraw before a new supervisor has been appointed. The Faculty is responsible for immediately appointing a new supervisor or supervisors in the event of long-term illness, leave of absence etc.

(2) Disputes between a PhD candidate and a supervisor about access to or rights to collected data, the share of contributions to joint article projects, or about copyright etc. can be brought before the Faculty for consideration and decision. If, after discussion, the parties have not reached agreement about how the dispute is to be resolved, the PhD candidate or supervisor can request the Faculty to change the supervision agreement.

## **Section 8 The required coursework component**

### **Section 8-1 The objective and organisation of the required coursework**

(1) The Faculty is responsible for ensuring that the required coursework, together with the research work (the PhD project and thesis), gives the PhD candidate an education at a high academic level in line with international standards, and learning outcomes that are in accordance with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework. Training in academic dissemination and in research ethics, philosophy of science and scientific methodology form part of this.

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

### **Section 8-2 The scope and content of the required coursework**

(1) The required coursework must be equivalent to 30-60 credits (ECTS) as specified by the Faculty. The courses included must be at master's or PhD level. At least 20 credits should be completed after admission.



Courses to be included should not be older than two years on start-up<sup>3</sup>. PhD candidates who have completed a student research programme must have completed the entire required coursework after admission to the student research programme.

(2) In addition to courses within the relevant academic discipline(s), the required coursework component should also include training that provides general competence.

(3) A course in research ethics and philosophy of science conferring minimum five credits must be included. Over and above this, the Faculty may decide on the inclusion of other compulsory courses.

(4) In topics or subject areas where no suitable courses are available, a special syllabus at PhD level can be approved as part of the required coursework.

(5) Exams included in the required coursework are regulated by the provisions on exams in the Universities and University Colleges Act and the Academic Regulations for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

(6) For a master's degree-level course to be approved as passed in the required coursework, a level corresponding to the grade C or higher according to the NMBU grading system is required.

(7) Courses at master's or PhD level completed at another educational institution will be recognised in accordance with the provisions of the Universities and University Colleges Act Section 3-5 second paragraph, provided that the courses are part of an approved individual education plan and meet the grade requirements set out in the PhD Regulations or the Faculty's supplementary provisions.

(8) The Faculty approves the required coursework based upon documentation that all elements included are completed and has received a pass. the PhD candidate has acquired the necessary academic expertise. The required coursework must be completed, passed and approved by the Faculty before the thesis can be submitted for evaluation.

### ***Section 8-3 Rights during parental leave from the PhD education***

A PhD candidate on parental leave can follow teaching during the leave period and sit exams in courses that form part of the required coursework, in accordance with the National Insurance Act Section 14-10 fourth paragraph and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration's (NAV) circular on Section 14-10 fourth paragraph of 18 December 2006.

## **Section 9 Quality assurance measures**

### ***Section 9-1 Measures to uncover and follow up deficiencies, progress reporting***

(1) NMBU's quality assurance of PhD education, among other things, include measures to uncover insufficient progress in the required coursework or in the work on the thesis and deficiencies in the supervision. The faculties are required to have procedures in place to follow up identified deficiencies.

(2) During the contract period the PhD candidate must annually and in the manner prescribed by NMBU, submit a written report to the Faculty on his/her progress in the PhD programme. The progress report must be treated confidentially if it contains information that makes this necessary.

(3) In connection with the progress reporting, the PhD candidate and main supervisor must review the individual education plan and data management plan and consider whether adjustments are necessary.

(4) The Faculty can by own judgement request additional reporting from the PhD candidate or the supervisors.

### ***Section 9-2 Compulsory seminars, midway assessment***

(1) As part of the quality assurance of the PhD education, at least three regular seminars must be held during the contract period: a start-up seminar, a midway assessment and a final seminar.

(2) Particular emphasis will be placed on the midway assessment.

- a. The midway assessment is to be conducted when the candidate has completed maximum two years of the PhD education period.

<sup>3</sup> Start-up date of the PhD education

- b. The candidate must present his/her work and be evaluated by a group of at least two persons appointed by the Faculty; one of the candidate's supervisors and another member with academic competence in the candidate's field, either belonging to or from outside the Faculty.
- c. The evaluation group is to consider the academic status and progress and provide feedback as prescribed by NMBU to the candidate, the supervisors and the Faculty.
- d. If the evaluation group reports significant shortcomings in the doctoral work that entail a risk that the education cannot be completed within the nominal length of study, the Faculty must, in cooperation with the supervisors and the candidate, implement measures to facilitate completion.

## Section 10 The academic thesis

### Section 10-1 Thesis requirements

- (1) The thesis must be an independent research work or research and development work that meets international standards with respect to academic level, ethical requirements, and methods within the field.
- (2) The thesis must contribute to the development of new scholarly knowledge and be of sufficiently high academic quality to merit publication as part of the literature in the field, or in an appropriate format as part of the research-based knowledge development in the field.
- (3) The thesis may consist of a monograph or a compilation of several pieces of work in the form of scholarly manuscripts and/or articles. If the thesis consists of several part-works, the thesis must contain an introductory chapter ('*kappe*') which from an overall perspective, summarises and collates the research questions and conclusions presented in them. The PhD candidate must be the sole author of this introductory chapter.
- (4) The main component of the doctoral thesis may consist of a new product or a systematised collection of material, or it can be presented in a different way (for example, sound, images, video, electronic forms of presentation) where its theoretical and methodological basis is not apparent from the product itself. In such cases, in addition to presenting the product itself, the thesis must have an additional part. The additional part must consist of 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.
- (5) If the thesis consists of several scholarly works that have been produced in cooperation with other co-authors, the PhD candidate should normally be the first author of at least half the manuscripts/articles. The Vancouver Convention's standards for co-authorship must be complied with. Upon submission of the thesis, each scholarly work with several co-authors must be accompanied by a declaration describing the PhD candidates' contribution and the contributions of each co-author. The declaration must be signed by both the PhD candidate and the co-authors. The PhD candidate is responsible for obtaining such declarations of co-authorship.
- (6) The thesis must be written in either English or Norwegian. In both cases, the thesis must contain a brief abstract in English and a brief abstract in Norwegian.

### Section 10-2 Archiving and accessibility of research data

The research data on which the scholarly thesis is based must comply with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) and be as open as possible and as closed as necessary, cf. NMBU Guidelines for Research Data Management. NMBU Open Research Data or corresponding research data archives must be used for archiving and to make research data accessible.

### Section 10-3 Work not eligible for evaluation

- (1) With the exception of work produced as part of a veterinary diplomate programme or a veterinary student research programme, works or part-works that the candidate has had accepted as part of the basis for previous exams or degrees cannot form part of the PhD degree. However, data, analyses or methods from previous degrees may be used as the basis for work within the PhD project.
- (2) Published papers cannot be accepted as part of the thesis if the publication date precedes the candidate's date of start-up by more than five years. A thesis including published papers that are more than 10 years old (reckoned from the publication date) cannot be accepted for evaluation for the PhD degree.



## Section 11 Ownership of results and the duty to report work results with a commercial potential

### Section 11-1 Ownership of results

(1) For PhD candidates who are employees of NMBU, all results produced in connection with the doctoral project will be NMBU's property, cf. the Act relating to the Right to Employees' Inventions and NMBU's *Guidelines relating to the employer's rights to work results*.

(2) For PhD candidates with an employer other than NMBU, the main rule is that ownership of the results follows from what has been agreed between the PhD candidate and his/her employer.

(3) The regulation of ownership of results between NMBU and external parties must be specified in the PhD contract, and the regulation must comply with the NMBU *Guidelines for Administration of Intellectual Property Rights and Physical Material in Third Party Relationships*.

### Section 11-2 Obligation to report results with commercial potential

(1) Pursuant to the Act relating to the Right to Employees' Inventions and NMBU's Guidelines to Employers' Right to Work Results, PhD candidates who are employees of NMBU are obliged to notify NMBU of results of commercial value that arise in connection with their doctoral work.

(2) For PhD candidates with an external employer, the obligation to report must be stipulated in the PhD contract between NMBU, the PhD candidate and the employer, and, if relevant, other external parties.

## IV. COMPLETION

### Section 12 Submission and application for evaluation of the thesis

#### Section 12-1 Submission and application for evaluation of the thesis

(1) Submission of the thesis must be recommended by the main supervisor, or if applicable, by the Faculty. The PhD candidate cannot apply to the Faculty to have the thesis evaluated until the required coursework has been approved, cf. Section 8-2 (8).

(2) The application for evaluation of a thesis must be submitted to the Faculty.

The application must include:

- a. The thesis in electronic (PDF) format
- b. Confirmation that the Faculty has approved the required coursework
- c. Co-authorship declarations if required, cf. Section 10-1 (5)
- d. Declaration from the main supervisor
- e. Documentation of necessary permissions if required, cf. Section 5-4 (2)
- f. Confirmation that the thesis has not been submitted for evaluation at another institution

#### Section 12-2 Processing the application

The Faculty considers the application for evaluation of the thesis. An application that does not meet the requirements in Section 10-1 and Section 8-2 (8) is to be rejected. The Faculty can reject an application to have a thesis evaluated if it is evident that the thesis is not of sufficiently high scientific quality. In other cases, the application will be approved, and the thesis will be sent to the evaluation committee for evaluation.

### Section 13 Appointment of the evaluation committee

(1) When the Faculty has approved the application for evaluation of the thesis, the Faculty appoints an evaluation committee consisting of at least three members who will evaluate the thesis, and, if applicable, the trial lecture, and the public defence of the thesis. The impartiality rules set out in the Public Administration Act Section 6 apply to the committee members.

(2) The supervisors, represented by the main supervisor, propose an evaluation committee. Grounds must be given for the proposal, and it must be described how the committee as a whole covers the subject area of the thesis. If any of the criteria in Section 13 (3) are deviated from, the reasons for this must be specified.

(3) The composition of the committee must ensure that:

- a. All the members have a doctoral degree in a relevant academic field.
- b. Two of the members have no affiliation to NMBU, and at least one member should hold a main position at a recognised foreign research institution.
- c. Different genders are represented, if possible.
- d. One of the members holds a permanent position at NMBU. This member chairs and coordinates the committee.

(4) Appointed supervisors and others who have contributed to the work on the PhD project or the thesis cannot be members of the evaluation committee.

(5) The PhD candidate must be informed of the proposed composition of the evaluation committee and be given an opportunity to comment this in writing no later than five working days after being informed. The Faculty decides how any comments will be dealt with.

(6) In the event that a committee member turns out to be unable to perform his/her function, the Faculty may appoint a deputy member of the evaluation committee.

## **Section 14 The work of the evaluation committee**

### ***Section 14-1 General provisions***

The committee's coordinator must inform external members of the evaluation committee about NMBU's PhD Regulations and the current guidelines for evaluation of doctoral degrees. From the committee is appointed until the doctoral degree exam has been completed, there must be no contact between supervisors and the committee concerning the PhD candidate or the PhD candidate's work.

### ***Section 14-2 Evaluation of the thesis***

(1) When evaluating the thesis, particular emphasis must be placed on whether the thesis meets the requirements set out in Section 10. An overall assessment must be made, and the thesis's 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.

(2) The evaluation committee may request to look into the source material used by the PhD candidate, and also request supplementary information for the purposes of elaboration and clarification.

(3) Based on the submitted thesis and any additional material, the evaluation committee can recommend the Faculty to permit minor revisions before the final recommendation is made. In its preliminary recommendation, the committee must provide a specified written list of what the candidate needs to revise. If the Faculty permits such revisions, the PhD candidate will be given a deadline normally not longer than three months to revise the thesis. The PhD candidate cannot appeal decisions made by the Faculty pursuant to this provision. The evaluation committee is to be given a deadline of up to six weeks from they receive the revised thesis until they submit their final recommendation.

(4) If the committee finds that fundamental changes with respect to theories, hypotheses, material or methods are necessary before the thesis can be recommended for public defence, the committee must submit a recommendation that the thesis is found not to be worthy of a public defence for the PhD degree.

### ***Section 14-3 The evaluation committee's recommendation***

(1) The committee must submit a joint reasoned recommendation to the Faculty on whether the thesis is worthy of a public defence for the doctoral degree. All parts of the submitted or presented documentation must be reviewed on the basis of the criteria in Section 10. The recommendation should be written in a discussion-based form and it should end with a clear conclusion that the committee:

- a. recommends that the thesis be approved for public defence, or
- b. recommends that the Faculty permits minor revisions of the thesis before the final recommendation is made, cf. Section 14-2 (3), or
- c. recommends that the thesis not be approved for public defence (rejected), cf. Section 14-2 (4).

(2) In its recommendation, the evaluation committee must state their judgement on the level of the thesis in relation to the international standard in the field.

(3) Any disagreement between the committee members must be mentioned in the recommendation, and individual statements, if any, must be enclosed with the recommendation.

(4) The committee's recommendation must be available within three months of the committee receiving all parts of the thesis for evaluation, and no later than 25 working days before the planned public defence. If the Faculty permits minor revisions of the thesis, cf. Section 14-2 (3), a new deadline will apply from the date on which the thesis is re-submitted.

(5) The Faculty communicates the evaluation committee's recommendation to the PhD candidate and the main supervisor. The PhD candidate is to be given a deadline of 10 working days to submit written comments on the recommendation. If the PhD candidate does not wish to submit comments, he/she must inform the Faculty about this as soon as possible. If the PhD candidate's comments have a bearing on the question of whether the thesis can be approved, the comments should be presented to the evaluation committee before the Faculty makes a decision on the matter.

#### ***Section 14-4 Correction of formal errors in the thesis***

(1) A thesis will be evaluated exactly as it is submitted and cannot be changed (except for revisions permitted pursuant to Section 14-2 (3)) or withdrawn before a final decision is made on whether it is worthy of a public defence for the PhD degree.

(2) The PhD candidate can apply once to the Faculty for permission to correct formal errors (errata) in the approved thesis to be made public. The application must include an errata list, showing the corrections the candidate wishes to make to the thesis. The deadline to apply to correct formal errors is one week after the candidate has received the evaluation committee's recommendation.

### **Section 15 The Faculty's consideration of the evaluation committee's recommendation**

#### ***Section 15-1 Unanimous recommendations – 'approved for public defence' or 'minor revision'***

(1) If the evaluation committee unanimously recommends that the thesis be publicly defended for the PhD degree, the Faculty may, without further consideration, approve it.

(2) If the evaluation committee unanimously recommends minor revision, the Faculty may, without further consideration, allow the PhD candidate to revise the thesis.

#### ***Section 15-2 Unanimous negative recommendation or split recommendation***

(1) If the evaluation committee's recommendation is either unanimously negative or split, the Faculty must decide whether the thesis is worthy of a public defence for the PhD degree.

(2) If the Faculty chooses to base its decision on the unanimous recommendation, the Faculty makes a decision in accordance with the recommendation.

If the recommendation is split or if the Faculty is in doubt whether to base its decision on the committee's unanimous recommendation, the Faculty may seek further clarification from the evaluation committee and/or appoint two new experts to submit individual statements about the thesis. Such supplementary statements or individual statements must be presented to the PhD candidate with an opportunity to submit comments. If both the new experts agree with the majority's original recommendation, then the recommendation is to be followed. The PhD candidate must be informed of the outcome after the statements from the new experts have been considered.

#### ***Section 15-3 Application for a new evaluation***

(1) A PhD thesis that has been rejected by the Faculty may be evaluated in a new version at the earliest six months after the Faculty made its decision. A new evaluation can only be made once.

(2) In such case, the Faculty appoints a new evaluation committee. At least one member of the original committee should be re-appointed. The new evaluation committee is to conduct its evaluation on an independent basis, but it must nonetheless be allowed to see the previous evaluation.

(3) An application for a new evaluation must be submitted within two years after the Faculty made its decision to reject the thesis.

### **Section 16 Publication**

#### ***Section 16-1 Publication requirement***

(1) The thesis must be published.

(2) The candidate must submit a brief press release on the thesis to the Faculty, in Norwegian and in English.

### **Section 16-2 Printing the thesis**

- (1) Once the thesis has been found worthy of a public defence, it must be printed in the format prescribed by NMBU.
- (2) The thesis must be printed exactly as it was submitted, with the exception of permitted revisions, cf. Section 14-2 (3), and any approved corrections of formal errors, cf. Section 14-4 (2).

### **Section 16-3 Accessibility**

- (1) The thesis must be made publicly available no later than two weeks before the public defence (disputation).
- (2) No restrictions may be placed on the publication or availability of a thesis, with the exception of a previously agreed postponement of the public release date not exceeding four months. Such a postponement may be permitted to allow NMBU and any external party that has provided full or partial funding for the PhD education to decide on any commercialisation including patents. An external party cannot demand that the thesis in whole or in part be exempt from public disclosure.
- (2) When publishing the thesis, the candidate must comply with the applicable guidelines for crediting institutions. This means that NMBU must be listed as the author address for the thesis and any part-works that form part of it, but that other institutions also must be mentioned if, in each individual case, they have made a necessary and significant contribution to the published work or its basis.
- (3) NMBU reserves a non-exclusive right to archive the thesis and make it electronically available via NMBU's open institutional research archive (Brage). The thesis must be archived and made available in its entirety, as one document, including any part-works. The PhD candidate can choose to reserve the right to postpone the electronic availability (on the internet) for up to two years from the date of the public defence.

## **Section 17 The doctoral exam – trial lecture and public defence**

### **Section 17-1 Trial lecture**

- (1) After the thesis has been submitted and before the public defence, the PhD candidate must give a trial lecture on a specified topic. This is an independent part of the doctoral exam. The purpose of the trial lecture is to test the PhD candidate's ability to acquire knowledge over and above the topic of the thesis, and the ability to convey this knowledge in a lecture setting. The lecture should last for 45 minutes. The academic level of the lecture must be suited to master's degree students or students in the final phase of a five-year programme of professional study.
- (2) The title of the trial lecture is to be decided by the evaluation committee and communicated to the PhD candidate 10 working days before the lecture takes place. The topic of the lecture should not be directly linked to the specific topic of the thesis. The trial lecture must be held in English or Norwegian unless another language is approved.
- (3) The Faculty decides when the trial lecture will take place. It can be held in connection with (the day before or on the same day as) the public defence or earlier.
- (4) If the trial lecture is held in connection with the public defence, the evaluation committee assesses the trial lecture and decides whether it merits a pass. For a trial lecture held earlier, the Faculty appoints a separate committee to evaluate the trial lecture and decide on its approval. This committee's members must be permanent NMBU academic staff with competence in the relevant field. At least one member of the evaluation committee must take part in the assessment.
- (5) If the committee decides that the trial lecture does not merit a pass, the grounds for the decision must be stated. In such case, the PhD candidate can give a new trial lecture on a new topic, no earlier than 14 days and no later than six months after the first attempt. Only one additional attempt is allowed.
- (6) The trial lecture must be passed before the public defence of the thesis may take place.

### **Section 17-2 Public defence of the thesis (disputation)**

- (1) The public defence of the thesis must take place within two months of the Faculty having approved it for public defence. The time and place of the public defence must be announced at least 10 working days in advance, together with information about how the thesis has been made public.

- (2) The public defence must as a main rule be held at NMBU.

- (3) The same committee that evaluated the thesis must also assess the public defence.
- (4) The public defence is to be held in the language of the thesis unless the Faculty has approved another language.
- (5) There must be two ordinary opponents who both are members of the evaluation committee.
- (6) The public defence is chaired by the Dean or a person appointed by the Dean. The chairperson gives a brief account of the submission and evaluation of the thesis and of the assessment of the trial lecture. The PhD candidate will then explain the purpose and results of the doctoral work.
- (7) The public defence is to be a scholarly discussion between the opponents and the PhD candidate on the formulation of research questions, the methodological, empirical and theoretical basis of the thesis, and the documentation and form of presentation. Particular emphasis should be placed on testing the tenability of important conclusions drawn by the PhD candidate in the thesis. The questions the opponents choose to pursue need not be limited to those discussed in the committee's statement on the thesis. After both opponents have concluded their questioning and the PhD candidate have been given the opportunity to defend the thesis, members of the audience must be given the opportunity to comment *ex auditorio*. The chairperson concludes the public defence.
- (8) The evaluation committee submits a reasoned recommendation to the Faculty in which the committee describes how it has assessed the defence of the thesis. The report must conclude on the question of whether the public defence is assessed as approved or not approved.

### **Section 17-3 Approval of the doctoral degree exam**

- (1) If the evaluation committee unanimously recommends approving the public defence, the Faculty may, without further consideration, approve the doctoral degree exam as a whole.
- (2) If the evaluation committee's recommendation is unanimously negative or split, the Faculty must consider and decide the question of whether to approve the public defence. If the Faculty does not approve the public defence of the thesis, the PhD candidate can be given one more attempt at defending the thesis. The Faculty decides when the new public defence will take place. A new public defence cannot take place until six months have elapsed, and, if possible, it should be evaluated by the committee who evaluated the thesis and the original public defence.

### **Section 18 Conferral of the degree, and diploma**

- (1) Based on the Faculty's report that the required coursework component, the thesis and the doctoral exam have been approved, the Rector confers the degree Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) on the PhD candidate.
- (2) The diploma is issued by NMBU. The diploma must contain information about the PhD programme, the supervisors, the approved required coursework, the title of the thesis, the title of the trial lecture, and the evaluation committee. The diploma is to be signed by the Rector and the Director of Research.
- (3) A Diploma Supplement is issued by NMBU in accordance with the prevailing guidelines for such supplements.

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

### **Section 19 Cooperation on PhD programmes**

NMBU may collaborate with Norwegian or international degree-conferring institutions on PhD education in the form of joint degrees or cotutelle agreements.

### **Section 20 Joint degrees**

By a 'joint degree' at PhD level is meant a collaboration between several institutions to establish and offer a (joint) PhD programme. The collaboration is organised as a consortium, regulated by an agreement, and must be based on an already established, stable, academic cooperation between the participants. The Rector can issue further guidelines for collaboration on joint degrees.

### **Section 21 Cotutelle agreements**

A 'cotutelle agreement' regulates the collaboration between two or more institutions on joint supervision and education of *one* PhD candidate. A cotutelle agreement must be based on already existing, stable academic cooperation between institutions.



## Section 22 Conditions for joint degrees and cotutelle agreements

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

(2) As a minimum, agreements on joint degrees or cotutelle collaboration must regulate admission, funding, the required coursework component, supervision, stays at the institutions, reporting duties, the thesis language, the form of the thesis, evaluation, conferral of the degree, the diploma and the rights to results. The nominal length of study of the PhD education at the cooperating institution must also be three years of full-time study. The PhD candidate must be admitted to both institutions.

(3) Agreements on joint degrees or cotutelle cooperation are signed by the Rector.

## VI. APPEALS, ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

### Section 23 Appeals

#### ***Section 23-1 Appeals against rejections of applications for admission, against decisions to terminate the right to study, and against rejections of applications for approval of required coursework elements***

Rejections of applications for admission, decisions on enforced termination, and rejections of applications for approval of elements forming part of the required coursework can be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff and the Universities and University Colleges Act Section 4-13.

#### ***Section 23-2 Appeals concerning exams taken as part of the required coursework***

Pursuant to the Universities and University Colleges Act Section 5-3, the grades awarded for exams taken as part of the required coursework component can be appealed and a new assessment demanded. Formal errors in connection with an exam can be appealed pursuant to the Universities and University Colleges Act Section 5-2. Suspicion of cheating or attempted cheating in courses that form part of the required coursework, or in connection with the thesis are dealt with in accordance with NMBU's guidelines for this and the Universities and University Colleges Act Sections 4-7 and 4-13.

#### ***Section 23-3 Appeals against rejections of application for evaluation, ad non-approval of thesis, trial lecture or public defence***

(1) A rejection of an application for evaluation of the thesis and decisions not to approve a trial lecture or public defence of a thesis can be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff. A decision not to approve (i.e. to reject) a thesis can be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff. and the Universities and University Colleges Act Section 4-13 (4).

(2) If the Faculty or appeal body finds reason to do so, a committee or individuals may be appointed to assess the evaluation that was carried out and the criteria on which it was based, or to carry out a new or supplementary expert assessment.

#### ***Section 23-4 Deadline for appeal and proceedings***

(1) The deadline for appealing is three weeks from the candidate received notification of the Faculty's decision.

(2) A reasoned appeal must be submitted to the Faculty. Following a new assessment of the case, the Faculty may uphold, annul or amend the decision appealed against. If the Faculty does not grant the appeal, the appeal will be forwarded to NMBU's Appeals Committee.

### Section 24 Entry into force

These Regulations enter into force on 1 July 2020. Concurrently the 'Regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences' of 15 May 2014 are repealed.

### Section 25 Transitional provisions

Any person who, when these Regulations enter into force, has been admitted to a PhD programme in accordance with the Regulations of 15 May 2014 for the Philosophiae Doctor degree (PhD) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, will retain the rights set out therein if this is to the benefit of the person concerned.