



## **Internal Faculty Guidelines for PhD Studies at LANDSAM: Information for PhD programme committees, candidates, and supervisors**

Revised version. Approved by the Dean Eva Falleth, 31. August 2021

These guidelines have been developed by LANDSAM; the current document is a revision of the version initially approved 25 June 2019. These guidelines provide necessary information and guidelines to be consulted by PhD programme committees, PhD candidates, and supervisors. NMBU's **Regulations for the degree of Philosophia Doctor (PhD)** were revised in 2020 (an updated version in Norwegian is found on <https://www.nmbu.no/forskning/forskerutdanning/forskrifter>; in English on [Regulations and guidelines - doctoral degrees NMBU | NMBU](#)). LANDSAM has also developed a set of Faculty-specific Supplementary Provisions to NMBU's PhD Regulations (to be found here: [Supplementary provisions for the PhD programmes | NMBU](#)). While NMBU's PhD Regulations have legal status, the guidelines presented here are internal to the Faculty. Still, they apply to all PhD candidates admitted to a PhD program at the Faculty, both candidates employed at the Faculty and candidates whose PhD research is funded through other sources.

The Faculty, in accordance with the NMBU Regulations, has three years of full-time study as the nominal length of study for a PhD education. All PhD candidates at the Faculty shall normally start their studies at the beginning of the autumn semester (1 September). The norm is that within 4 months after starting their PhD studies, all PhD candidates, together with the supervisory team, the Faculty, and if relevant the external institutions involved, sign a written contract on the PhD education. The contract sets out the candidate's PhD education plan, the supervisory team, and the responsibilities, rights and obligations of the parties involved. The PhD programme committee should approve the education plan before the contract is signed.

### **Supervision**

To support and guide the PhD studies towards a successful completion, each PhD candidate will receive individual supervision, given by a supervisory team consisting of at least two researchers, one of whom is appointed as the principal/main supervisor. The main supervisor should be employed at the faculty, and PhD projects are expected to cover research topics of relevance for the faculty and research fields where the faculty has academic capacity and resources to supervise. Normally, the co-supervisor(s) in the supervisory team should also be anchored in the faculty's academic environment.

A final proposal on the composition of the supervisory team is, after consulting with the PhD candidate, forwarded by the main supervisor to the Head of Department of the relevant co-supervisor(s) for a "no objection", and then submitted for approval together with the PhD candidate's education plan. At a later stage, requests for possible changes in the supervisory team shall be forwarded to the PhD programme committee for approval, after consulting with relevant Heads of Department.

If it is deemed necessary in order to ensure good quality, an external co-supervisor may be considered for candidates employed at LANDSAM if the financial resources required for such an arrangement are available. As a rule, needs for external co-supervision should be taken into consideration at an early stage of the PhD project. A needs-based assessment should be made, and inclusion of an external supervisor recommended by the PhD programme committee prior to the submission of the PhD candidate's education plan, so that inclusion of an external supervisor is both approved and budgeted prior to the approval of the PhD education plan (within 4 months after startup).

## PhD seminars

The education plan of all PhD candidates at LANDSAM shall include three seminars: Introductory/Start seminar, Midway/Mid-term seminar, and Final/Late-term seminar. For each seminar, one or two discussants/opponents/evaluators are assigned to provide comments and advice on the work presented, and to give a brief assessment of the work plan and progress of the candidate. The Introductory/Start seminar can rely on internal discussants only (i.e. discussants employed at LANDSAM). For the Midway seminar, the supervisory team should invite an external discussant; the supervisory team can in addition invite an internal discussant. After the public part of the Midway seminar, the supervisors and the discussant(s) go through NMBUs evaluation form together with the candidate in a separate meeting. For the Final seminar, the supervisory team, in consultation with the PhD candidate, decides upon the most suitable format for the seminar: one or two discussants; internal or external discussants.

External discussants receive a payment of NOK 3.500 (incl. taxes). If longer-distance travel for academic reasons is considered necessary by the supervisory team, travel expenses up to maximum NOK 5000 can be covered by LANDSAM's Research School budget. However, the Faculty takes climate challenges seriously and encourages low-emission solutions, requesting the supervisory team in these cases to consider if seminars with external discussants can be arranged with short-distance travels or digitally.

Scholars who have served as external discussants/opponents/evaluators at Midway or Final seminars can normally not be appointed as opponents and members of the evaluation committee for the PhD defence.

### For PhD candidates employed at LANDSAM:

The faculty appoints a PhD candidate who has been granted a PhD fellowship in a 100% position for three years. The fellowships are publicly announced, and the candidate is selected among all applicants through a regular employment process for temporary academic staff. The overall aim of these positions is to make it possible for the candidate to complete a research education and submit a defensible thesis within the given three-year period. There is no duty work attached to the positions.

All PhD candidates employed at LANDSAM get access to basic IT equipment, including a standard PC, and services in agreement with regulations at NMBU and LANDSAMs policy. Employed PhD candidates appointed after 2018 will further receive NOK 32 000 per year for three years as *driftsmidler* to cover running expenses related to the PhD studies, totaling NOK 96 000. This money will be set aside on an account at the faculty. *Driftsmidler* are funds that shall be used to carry out and complete the doctoral project. Typically, the *driftsmidler* are used to cover expenses connected to conference participation, course participation (outside NMBU), equipment, books, field and survey work, publication fees, language editing (beyond 5000 NOK), and printed copies of the dissertation (beyond 16 copies).<sup>1</sup> On the candidate's initiative, these funds can also be used to pay for external supervision.

In addition to the *driftsmidler*, the faculty supports each candidate with maximum 5000 NOK for language editing of the thesis and translation of the summary. If more funds are needed for this purpose, part of the *driftsmidler* should be set aside in the budget. If the candidate wishes to print the dissertation in more than 16 copies, funds should be set aside for this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> For more comprehensive information on [driftsmidler](#)

### **For candidates without an employment contract at LANDSAM:**

For candidates without an employment contract with the faculty, the faculty will not cover basic IT equipment nor *driftsmidler*. These, as well as costs for necessary travel insurances, especially in connection with fieldwork outside the EU/EØS area, should be included in the candidate's own budget for the PhD studies. The amount and access to funds to cover running expenses should be detailed in the PhD agreement. There will also be an agreement concerning a desk fee based on the university policy. This agreement will be between the faculty and the employer, affiliated university, etc. The annual desk fee in 2021 is 100 000.

PhD candidates without an employment contract with LANDSAM will receive access to NMBU's IT- and Library services and buildings if needed. This is regulated through a separate agreement (SOT), which will be completed and signed before study start and is valid until the defense is completed.

### **Printing of the thesis**

The faculty pays for (max) 16 printed copies of the dissertation for all PhD candidates (that is, 6 for libraries, 2 for institutional archive, 3 for committee members, 1 for chair of committee, 2-3 for supervisors, 1 for candidate) for all PhD candidates. Additional copies for distribution need to be paid by the candidate/project.

### **PhD defence – opponents and cost coverage**

In line with the ambition to promote environmentally responsible practices, the Faculty recommends that opponents are either found within reasonable travel distance, e.g. Northern Europe, making low-emission travels possible, or attend the defence digitally.

The faculty normally covers a dinner for the evaluation committee the day before the defence, hosted by the internal member of the committee (cost coverage according to State regulations), and a lunch at Campus on the day of the defence for both opponents and supervisors. Remuneration, travel expenses and per diem for the committee, flowers and refreshments during the scheduled break and the reception afterwards are also covered by the faculty.

### **Extra work for the faculty/department by candidates employed at LANDSAM**

The Faculty's policy is that the three-year period of a PhD education implies full-time work towards completing the project with the submission of a high-quality thesis. If the candidate during the PhD-employment period gives a lecture or seminar directly related to the dissertation theme, or assumes responsibility for an academic events closely related to the PhD topic, implying limited time use, these tasks can be considered part of the PhD education. The candidate must explicitly and voluntarily accept to take on such tasks and can also decline to do so; the priority within the 3-years' time frame being the quality of the candidate's research education and his/her possibility to complete the dissertation on time.

However, PhD candidates often want to complement their PhD education with getting more experience in a broader range of relevant tasks within academia to plan for an academic career. Such extra work may also be in high demand with Departments. NMBU has developed guidelines for this type of work, *Retningslinjer for pliktarbeid og arbeid utover pliktarbeid/ [Guidelines for compulsory duties and work beyond compulsory duties in NMBUs PhD education](#)* (in Norwegian cf. this website: [Forskrifter og retningslinjer for doktorgrader ved NMBU | NMBU](#); in English: [Regulations and guidelines - doctoral degrees NMBU](#)). The faculty has [guidelines for registration](#) of these hours.