

Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme at the Universities (PhD order)

Pursuant to section 8, subsection 1 and section 34, Subsections 1 and 2 of the Danish University Act (*Universitetsloven*), cf. Ministerial Order no. 1368 of 7 December 2007, the following is stipulated:

Part 1

Purpose, structure etc.

1. The PhD programme is a research programme aiming to train PhD students at an international level to undertake research, development and teaching assignments in the private and public sectors, for which a broad knowledge of research is required.

(2) The PhD programme mainly comprises active research training under supervision.

2. The university may award the PhD degree within fields within which the university carries out research and has set up a PhD school independently or in cooperation with other universities.

3. The PhD degree shall be awarded to students who have successfully completed the PhD programme, cf. however section 15, subsection 2, and successfully defended their PhD thesis.

(2) Persons who have been awarded a PhD degree shall have the right to use the title of PhD.

4. The PhD programme shall be equivalent to 180 ECTS points and shall normally take the form of full-time studies; however, the universities may lay down internal rules providing for part-time studies.

(2) 60 ECTS points correspond to one year of full-time studies.

Part 2

Admission etc. to the PhD programme

5. Admission to the PhD programme shall be based on a successfully completed Master's degree or equivalent.

(2) The university may decide to let the PhD programme start in connection with the Master's programme; however, it shall be ensured that the entire study programme has the scope and level described in Sections 1 and 4. The university shall lay down internal rules thereon.

(3) Students admitted under subsection 2 shall have the opportunity to complete the Master's programme.

6. The university shall decide who is to be admitted as PhD students. The university's internal rules shall stipulate the criteria on which admission is based.

(2) The PhD students shall be enrolled administratively on the PhD programme.

Part 3

Contents of the PhD programme etc.

7. The PhD programme shall be set up in accordance with internal rules laid down by the university.

(2) During the programme, the student shall be required to:

- 1) Carry out independent research work under supervision (the PhD project).
- 2) Complete PhD courses totalling approx. 30 ECTS points.
- 3) Participate in active research environments, including stays at other, mainly foreign, research institutions.
- 4) Gain experience of teaching or other form of knowledge dissemination, which is, as far as possible, related to the student's PhD project.
- 5) Complete a PhD thesis on the basis of the PhD project.

(3) The university may approve on a case-by-case basis that the PhD programme shall not comprise one or more of the elements described in subsection 2, nos. 1-4, if the university finds that the PhD student has completed other study elements that are comparable to the above (credit transfer).

8. For each PhD student the university shall appoint a principal supervisor who shall be responsible for the student's PhD programme. The principal supervisor shall be a recognised researcher within the relevant field, be employed by the university and affiliated with the PhD school.

(2) On its own initiative or following an application from the PhD student, the university may:

- 1) Appoint other supervisors, who must be qualified within the relevant field.
- 2) Replace the principal supervisor and other supervisors.
- (3) The university shall offer the PhD student a teaching course.
- (4) The university shall offer the PhD student teaching guidance.
- (5) The university shall ensure that the required resources are available for the PhD student to complete the PhD programme as laid down in the student's PhD plan.
- (6) The university shall lay down internal rules for the supervision provided to the PhD student.

Part 4

Completion of the PhD programme

9. Within three months of the start of the PhD programme, the university shall approve a research and study plan (the PhD plan) for the individual PhD student.

(2) The PhD plan shall, as a minimum, contain the following:

- 1) A schedule.
- 2) An agreement on the type of supervision provided.
- 3) A plan for the PhD project.
- 4) A plan for PhD courses.
- 5) A plan for participation in active research environments.
- 6) A plan for teaching activities or other types of knowledge dissemination.
- 7) Any agreements on intellectual property rights.
- 8) A financing plan (budget)

10. At regular points in time during the PhD programme, the university shall assess whether the PhD student is following the PhD plan and, if necessary, adjust the plan. This assessment shall be based on an opinion from the principal supervisor, who, after having consulted the PhD student, shall confirm that the PhD programme is following the PhD plan or justify in writing why adjustments are required. The PhD student shall be given the opportunity to submit his or her comments on the opinion within a deadline of at least two weeks. In the assessment, the university shall take full account of periods of documented illness, maternity/paternity leave and other approved leave. The university shall lay down internal rules on the frequency of such

assessments.

(2) If the university assesses that the PhD student is not following the PhD plan, in spite of any adjustments made to the plan, the student shall be given three months to get back on course. The three months shall not give rise to an extension of the PhD programme.

(3) The university shall make a new assessment as described in subsection 1 as soon as possible after the end of the three-month period.

(4) If the assessment described in subsection 3 is negative, the student shall be expelled from the PhD programme. The university shall inform any other employer(s) of the expulsion without delay.

Part 5 *PhD thesis*

11. The PhD thesis shall document the author's ability to apply relevant scientific methods and to carry out research work meeting the international standards for PhD degrees within the field in question.

12. The university shall lay down internal rules on the writing and submission of the PhD thesis.

(2) A PhD thesis cannot be submitted for assessment by two or more authors jointly.

(3) The PhD theses shall contain an abstract in Danish and English.

(4) Any articles included in the thesis may be written in cooperation with others, provided that each of the co-authors submits a written declaration stating the author's contribution to the work.

13. The PhD student's enrolment at the university shall expire upon the submission of the thesis.

14. Within one week of the submission of the thesis, the principal supervisor shall submit an opinion on the PhD programme as a whole, including the completion of the individual elements of the PhD plan, cf. section 9.

(2) If the principal supervisor states in the opinion that the PhD programme is not completed satisfactorily, the author shall be given at least two weeks to comment on the principal supervisor's opinion.

(3) On the basis of the opinion of the principal supervisor, cf. subsection 1, the author's comments, if any, cf. subsection 2, and the regular assessments, cf. section 10, subsection 1, the university shall determine whether the PhD programme is completed satisfactorily.

15. The thesis can only be accepted for assessment if the PhD programme is completed satisfactorily, cf. however subsection 2.

(2) In special cases the university may decide that a thesis may be accepted for assessment without the author having completed the PhD programme, if the university assesses that the author has in other ways acquired other comparable qualifications.

Part 6 *Assessment committee*

16. Not later than immediately following the submission of the PhD thesis, the university shall appoint an expert assessment committee composed of three members. The university shall appoint a chairman from among the committee members.

(2) The members of the assessment committee shall be recognised researchers within the

relevant field. Two of the members shall be external researchers, of whom at least one shall be from outside of Denmark, unless this is not practicable considering the subject in question. The PhD student's supervisors shall not be members of the assessment committee; however, the principal supervisor shall assist the assessment committee without voting rights.

17. Immediately after having appointed the members of the assessment committee, the university shall notify the author thereof. The author shall be entitled to object to the members appointed within a period of at least one week.

Part 7

Preliminary assessment of the PhD thesis

18. Within two months of the submission of the PhD thesis, the assessment committee shall make its recommendation to the university as to whether the PhD thesis fulfils the requirements for the award of the PhD degree. The recommendation shall be reasoned, and in the event of disagreement, the majority shall prevail. The university shall send a copy of the recommendation to the author forthwith.

(2) If the recommendation is favourable, the defence of the thesis shall commence.

(3) If the recommendation is not favourable, the assessment committee shall state in the recommendation whether the PhD thesis may be resubmitted in a revised version. In such case, a deadline for resubmission shall be stated. The author and the principal supervisor shall be given the opportunity to submit their comments on the recommendation within a period of at least two weeks.

(4) If the recommendation is not favourable, the university shall make one of the following decisions based on the assessment committee's recommendation and the author's and the principal supervisor's comments, if any:

- 1) That the defence of the thesis may not take place.
- 2) That the PhD thesis may resubmitted in a revised version within a deadline of at least three months. If the PhD thesis is resubmitted, it shall be assessed by the same assessment committee, unless special circumstances apply.
- 3) That the PhD thesis shall be submitted for assessment by a new assessment committee.

Part 8

Defence of the PhD thesis

19. The PhD thesis shall be defended publicly in accordance with internal rules laid down by the university. At the defence, the author shall be given the opportunity to explain his or her work and defend the PhD thesis before the members of the assessment committee.

(2) The university shall ensure that the PhD thesis is made available to the public in due time before the defence.

20. The university shall decide the time and place of the public defence.

(2) The defence shall take place two weeks after the assessment committee's submission of its recommendation, cf. section 18, subsection 1, at the earliest and within three months of the submission of the PhD thesis, at the latest, cf. however subsection 3.

(3) If special circumstances apply, the university may decide to postpone the defence. Postponement of the defence is subject to agreement between the author and the university, including on the date arranged for the defence.

Part 9

Award of the PhD degree

21. Immediately following the defence, the assessment committee shall make its recommendation as to whether the PhD degree should be awarded and shall notify the university and the author thereof. The recommendation shall be reasoned, and in the event of disagreement, the majority shall prevail.

(2) If the recommendation of the assessment committee is negative, the university may decide to let the thesis be assessed by a new assessment committee, if so requested by the author within a period of at least one week.

22. The PhD degree shall be awarded if the assessment committee submits a recommendation to that effect.

23. The university shall issue a certificate of the award of the PhD degree.

(2) Such certificate shall be in Danish and English and contain information on the relevant field and the subject of the PhD thesis as well as information on the PhD programme completed.

24. If the PhD degree is not awarded, the university shall upon request issue documentation in both Danish and English concerning the elements of the PhD programme that have been completed.

Part 10

The university's internal rules

25. The university shall lay down internal rules on:

- 1) Admission to the PhD programme, cf. section 5, subsection 2 and section 6, subsection 1.
- 2) Organisation of the PhD programme, cf. section 4, subsection 1, section 7, subsection 1 and section 10, subsection 1.
- 3) Appointment of the principal supervisor, cf. section 8, subsection 1, and any further supervisors, cf. section 8, subsection 2 and section 26, subsection 1, no. 1.
- 4) Supervision of PhD students, cf. section 8, subsection 6.
- 5) Writing and submission of the PhD thesis, cf. section 12, subsection 1.
- 6) Defence of the PhD thesis, cf. section 19, subsection 1.

(2) The internal rules shall contain a provision to the effect that the university may grant exemptions from the rules laid down by the university.

(3) The internal rules and material amendments thereto shall comprise the necessary transition arrangements.

(4) The internal rules in force from time to time shall be made public on the university's website.

Part 11

Other rules

26. The following shall apply to PhD scholarships financed by the Danish Council for Technology and Innovation:

- 1) In addition to the principal supervisor, cf. section 8, subsection 1, the university shall appoint a supervisor affiliated with the company in which the PhD student is employed. Such supervisor shall be qualified within the relevant field.
- 2) At least one of the members of the assessment committee, cf. section 16, subsection 1, shall have company-relevant research experience within the relevant field.

27. The Danish University and Property Agency shall be entitled to grant exemptions from the present Ministerial Order if unusual circumstances apply. This shall, however, not apply to the situations in which the university may grant exemptions, cf. section 5, subsection 2, section 7, subsection 3 and section 15, subsection 2.

(2) The Agency may allow deviations from the Ministerial Order as part of trials.

28. The university's decisions made under the present Ministerial Order may be referred to the Danish University and Property Agency, if the complaint concerns legal issues. Complaints shall be submitted within two weeks of the complainant having been informed of a decision.

(2) The PhD students and authors described in the present Ministerial Order shall be entitled to make complaints. However, in order to be entitled to submit complaints, authors who have not completed the PhD programme shall have had their PhD thesis accepted for assessment pursuant to section 15, subsection 2.

(3) The complaint shall be submitted to the university, after which time the university shall issue an opinion. The complainant shall be given the opportunity to comment on this opinion within a deadline of at least one week. The university shall send the complaint to the Agency enclosing the university's opinion and any comments from the complainant.

(4) It shall not be possible to refer the decisions of the Agency to higher administrative authorities.

Part 12

Commencement and interim provisions

29. This Ministerial Order shall enter into force on 1 February 2008.

(2) At the same time, Ministerial Order No. 114 of 8 March 2002 on the PhD Programme and the PhD Degree shall be repealed, cf. however Subsections 3 and 4.

(3) PhD students having commenced the PhD programme before 1 February 2008 shall be entitled to complete the PhD programme pursuant to the provisions of Ministerial Order No. 114 of 8 March 2002; however, the assessment and defence of the thesis and the decision on the award of the PhD degree shall be subject to the provisions of the present Ministerial Order.

(4) PhD students and authors, cf. section 28, subsection 2, having submitted their thesis before 1 February 2008 shall be entitled to decide that the assessment, defence and award of the PhD degree shall be subject to Ministerial Order No. 114 of 8 March 2002.

(5) The university shall lay down interim provisions for PhD students and authors who are covered by Subsections 3 and 4 but who wish to complete the PhD programme, and to have their thesis assessed etc., pursuant to the provisions of the present Ministerial Order.

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation,

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