

Ministerial Order on the PhD Course of Study and on the PhD Degree

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Ministerial Order no. 114 of 8 March 2002

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In accordance with section 2, subsection (1) and section 11, subsection (2) of the Universities Act, cf. ministerial order no. 1177 of 22 December 1999, and section 2 of Act no. 483 of 31 May 2000 on the Danish University of Education, the following shall apply:

Part 1

Aims, structure etc.

1. (1) The programme leading to the PhD degree is set up with the purpose of training researchers at an international level in interplay with the international research world. The PhD programme provides mainly active research training under supervision.

(2) The PhD programme is aimed at meeting present and future needs for qualified manpower to carry out research, development and teaching tasks at universities and in other institutions, in enterprises and organisations as well as for other public and private purposes which require a broad knowledge of research.

2. (1) Institutions of higher education comprised by the Universities Act or by the Act on the Danish University of Education may award the PhD degree within subject areas in which the institution concerned carries out research.

(2) Each institution shall determine the aims of its PhD programmes within the terms set by the present order.

3. (1) The PhD degree shall be awarded to candidates who have successfully completed a PhD programme, cf. though section 15, subsection (2), and has demonstrated, through a publicly defended thesis, a capacity to carry out a scientific project involving independent use of the scientific methodology of the subject and hereby furthering research at the level equivalent to the international standard of PhD degrees within the subject area.

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

4. (1) The extent of the PhD programme shall correspond to three years-full-time study, cf. subsection (3), based on the level of a completed Master's degree. However, the institutions may set regulations providing for part-time studies.

(2) One year of full-time studies is equivalent to 60 points on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS points).

(3) The institution may approve that the PhD programme be shorter than three years for students who in other ways have acquired the equivalent qualifications.

Part 2

Admission to the PhD programme etc.

5. (1) Admission to a PhD programme is based on a previously completed Master's degree course.

(2) In accordance with regulations set by the institutions, students who have not yet completed a course

of studies corresponding to that required for a Master's degree, can be enrolled as PhD students, provided that the total study programme is of the same scope and at a comparable level as described in sections 1 and 4.

(3) Students enrolled in accordance with subsection (2) have the right, concurrently with the enrolment in a PhD programme, to register for a Master's degree course and, in that case shall have the opportunity to complete the latter.

6. (1) Each institution decides on the enrolment criteria of a PhD programme. The criteria for admission must be stated in the regulations set by the institution, cf. section 30.

(2) The institution shall ensure that the resources required for the completion of the PhD programme are available so that the individual PhD student is able to carry out the programme in accordance with the student's individual study plan, (cf. section 10).

Part 3

The contents of the PhD programme etc.

7. (1) The PhD training shall be arranged in accordance with regulations set by the institution within the framework of its PhD programmes which may be:

1) General programmes within large units such as a faculty.

2) More specific programmes for example at research academies or within research course networks.

(2) Programmes may be established on the basis of national or international cooperation within public and private institutions, companies etc.

8. (1) The programme shall include:

1) Conduction of an independent research project under supervision (the PhD project).

2) Preparation of a written thesis based on the PhD project.

3) Completion with a satisfactory result of research courses (PhD courses), approved by the institution. The total extent of the courses must correspond to approximately 30 ECTS points.

4) Participation in research activities, including stays at other, mainly foreign, research institutions, or in similar ways.

5) Gaining teaching experience or experience in the dissemination of knowledge, directly related as far as possible to the PhD project in question.

(2) The institution may arrange with national and international partners for the establishment of courses for the PhD students to participate in and to be valued on the ECTS scale.

9. (1) In accordance with its regulations the institution shall provide for each PhD student:

1. A principal supervisor who is responsible for the full PhD study programme and who is employed by the institution, cf. subsection (2)

2. A project supervisor who is responsible for the monitoring of the PhD project. The project supervisor may be identical with the principal supervisor. If the PhD project is carried out outside the institution, the project supervisor shall normally be employed by the institution where the project is carried out.

3. Additional supervisors within the institution or elsewhere employed if considered necessary

(2) In special cases the institution may appoint a person not employed by the institution as principal supervisor. In this case, a written agreement shall be made between the institution where the student is enrolled and the principal supervisor's employer to ensure that in matters concerning the role of the principal supervisor the institution may exercise the same authority with the principal supervisor as if the latter was employed by the institution.

(3) Supervisors shall be approved by the institution to be qualified to supervise the student in the

relevant subject areas, and the principal supervisor and the project supervisor shall hold qualifications corresponding to those of full professors, associate professors or senior researchers. Criteria for the approval of supervisors must appear in the institution's regulations, cf. section 30.

(4) The PhD student may apply to the institution for replacement or appointment of further supervisors during the course of studies.

Part 4 *Student's Progress*

10. (1) The institution shall stipulate the requirements of each PhD student as to the successful completion of the PhD programme in a research and study plan (PhD plan) which must contain at least:

1. a time schedule for the course of studies
2. an agreement on the extent of supervision
3. a scheme for the PhD project
4. a scheme for participation in PhD courses
5. a scheme for the stays at any other research institutions, including institutions abroad
6. a scheme for the teaching activities or other forms of dissemination of knowledge
7. an agreement on copyright if the PhD course of studies is carried out in cooperation with several partners
8. an estimate of expected expenses (budget)

(2) The time schedule mentioned in subsection (1), no. 1 must ensure that the necessary time is set aside for the realization of the students own independent research in accordance with the PhD plan, including the writing of a thesis and for the completion of a Master's degree course if any, cf. section 5, subsection (3).

(3) The PhD plan must be prepared as soon as possible and not later than six months after the commencement of the PhD studies.

11. (1) The progress of the PhD student shall be assessed every six months to ensure that the student meets the requirements of the PhD plan and in order to make any necessary adjustments to the plan.

(2) This assessment must be carried out on basis of a report from the principal supervisor who upon consultations with the PhD student and the other supervisors confirms in writing that the work is being carried out in accordance with the PhD plan, or reports in writing on any adjustments made to the plan. In the assessment of whether the progress of the student has been satisfactory, documented periods of illness, maternity leave and other approved leave shall be taken into consideration. The PhD student shall be given the opportunity to comment, within a period of at least two weeks, on the report.

(3) If the PhD student is not meeting the requirements of the PhD plan the student shall be offered a period of three months to retrieve the situation. The PhD student shall answer to this offer within at least one week. If the student accepts the offer a new assessment will be made within a month from the end of the 3-month period.

(4) If the assessment made under the terms of subsection (1) or if the new assessment made under the terms of subsection (3) is negative, the PhD student may request, within a limit of at least one week, that the matter be brought for final decision before the body which awards the PhD degrees at the institution in question. (5) The offer under subsection (3) of an opportunity to retrieve the situation in connection with the semi-annual assessment shall only be made once to any PhD student during the PhD course of study.

12. (1) The enrolment of the PhD student can be cancelled at the end of the month in the following circumstances:

1. The institution judges, cf. section 11, subsection (3) that the PhD student is not meeting the requirements of the PhD plan and the PhD student has not accepted, within the limit set, the offer of an opportunity to retrieve the situation.
2. The institution judges that following to the period of three months, cf. section 11, subsection (3), the PhD student still does not meet the requirements and the PhD student has not requested, within the limit set, that the negative assessment be referred to the body which awards the PhD degrees of the institution in question, cf. section 11, subsection (4).
3. The body which awards the PhD degrees of the institution in question judges that the PhD student

no longer satisfies the requirements.

(2) The institution must inform the employer if any about the dismissal of the student.

13. (1) No later than at the time when the thesis is submitted, the principal supervisor shall submit a statement about the progress of the PhD student, including a report on the execution of the individual parts of the PhD plan, cf. section 10. The principal supervisor shall work out the statement in consultation with the project supervisor and other supervisors if any.

(2) On the basis of the principal supervisor's statement, cf. subsection (1), the institution decides whether the student has completed the PhD programme successfully. Should the institution find that this is not the case, the student may, within a limit of at least one week, require that the matter be brought for final decision before the body which awards the PhD degrees of the institution in question.

Part 5 *The PhD thesis*

14. (1) Each institution shall make regulations for the preparation and submission of the PhD thesis, including in which language the thesis and an abstract of it may be written.

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

(3) The institution can decide that manuscripts of other articles, or previously published articles, may be included in the thesis. If such parts of the thesis have been written in cooperation with others, a declaration from each of the authors must be attached stating the extent of the PhD student's contribution to the total work.

15. (1) The PhD thesis can only be accepted for assessment if the institution, cf. section 13, judges that the total PhD programme has been satisfactorily completed, cf. though subsection (2).

(2) In special cases, the institution may accept a PhD thesis for assessment without the author having completed a total PhD programme, if the author in other ways has acquired equivalent qualifications.

Part 6 *The assessment committee*

16. (1) Immediately after the PhD thesis has been submitted, the institution shall appoint an expert assessment committee composed of three members. At the same time the institution shall appoint the committee's chairman and within no more than two months the assessment committee shall make a preliminary recommendation.

(2) The members of the assessment committee must be professors, full-time associate professors or persons with corresponding academic qualifications. At least two of the members must come from outside the institution, preferably from abroad. The supervisors of the PhD student cannot be members of the committee, but the principal supervisor and the project supervisor shall take part in the work of the committee without voting rights.

17. (1) The author must be notified about the composition of the assessment committee and must be offered a period of at least one week to register any objection.

(2) The author must be notified about the final composition of the committee and shall be offered a period of at least one week to withdraw the thesis before the preliminary assessment.

Part 7 *The preliminary assessment of the PhD thesis*

18. (1) The assessment committee shall submit a preliminary recommendation which must be unanimous or made by a majority of the committee as to whether the thesis, in its preliminary form, fulfils the requirements for the award of a PhD degree.

19. (1) If the recommendation mentioned in section 18 is positive the author shall be informed and shall receive a copy of the recommendation.

(2) Provided it does not delay the defence of the thesis, the chairman of the assessment committee may

allow that limited changes or supplements are added to the thesis prior to, or in connection with, the defence of the thesis.

20. (1) If the recommendation of the thesis mentioned in section 18 is not favourable the committee shall also include a unanimous or a majority recommendation that will enable the institution in question to decide whether the author may submit the thesis in a revised form within a period of at least three months.

(2) The institution shall immediately inform the author that the thesis in the form it has been presented cannot be recommended for defence and of the decision that has been taken by the institution in accordance with subsection (1). The thesis must be returned to its author.

(3) If the thesis is submitted in a revised form it will be assessed by the assessment committee previously appointed, unless special circumstances apply.

Part 8

The defence of the PhD thesis

21. (1) The PhD thesis shall be defended publicly in accordance with regulations set by the institution. The institution shall make the thesis available publicly in due time before the defence takes place.

22. (1) The institution shall decide the time and venue of the public defence.

(2) The defence shall take place when the assessment committee has made its preliminary recommendation and not later than four months after the thesis has been submitted, cf. subsection (3).

(3) The institution may decide to postpone the defence with regard to the regulations on publication as contained in the legislation on inventions made at public research institutions or in the legislation on inventions made by employees, or if special circumstances apply. A postponement of the defence implies that an agreement is reached between the parties involved, including on when the defence can take place.

23. (1) At the defence the author shall be given the opportunity to explain the work and to defend the thesis before the members of the assessment committee. The person chairing the defence may allow other persons present to make a contribution during the defence.

Part 9

The award of the PhD degree

24. (1) Immediately after the defence, the assessment committee shall make its recommendation as to whether the PhD degree should be awarded, cf. section 3, subsection (1).

25. (1) If the members of the assessment committee cannot agree on a positive recommendation that the PhD degree be awarded, the institution must notify the author immediately.

(2) The committee must then submit its preliminary recommendation as soon as possible and the author shall be given a period of at least one week to comment on the recommendation, after which the committee shall make its final decision.

26. (1) The PhD degree shall be awarded if a positive recommendation has been made by at least two members of the assessment committee.

(2) If only one of the members recommends the award the PhD degree, the body responsible for the award of the PhD degree of the institution in question may decide by a majority of two-thirds of its voting members that the thesis be assessed by a new assessment committee, if the author so requests within a of at least one week.

(3) If no member of the assessment committee makes a positive recommendation the thesis cannot be assessed by a new assessment committee.

27. (1) The decision to award the PhD degree must be taken as soon as possible after the assessment committee has made its final recommendation.

28. (1) The institution shall issue a certificate of the award of the PhD degree.

(2) The certificate shall be in both Danish and English and shall contain information about the subject area and the main topic of the thesis, as well as information about the completed PhD study programme.

29. (1) PhD students who are not recommended for the award of the PhD degree may request the institution to issue documentation in both Danish and English concerning those parts of the PhD study programme that have been completed in a satisfactory way.

Part 10 *The institution's regulations*

30. (1) The institution shall lay down regulations concerning:

1. The admission to a PhD programme, cf. section 5, subsection (2), and section 6, subsection (1).
2. The aims of the PhD course of studies, and the individual PhD programmes, cf. section 2, subsection (2), and section 7.
3. The contents of the PhD programme and its structure, cf. section 10, including the regulations governing part-time studies and leave of absence, cf. section 4, subsection (1) and section 11, subsection (2).
4. The approval of supervisors and the guidelines of supervision, cf. section 9.
5. The preparation and submission of the PhD thesis, cf. section 14, subsection (1).
6. The defence of the PhD thesis, cf. section 21.
7. The transition measures, cf. section 34, subsection (5).

(2) The regulations shall allow that the institution in special circumstances may approve of deviations from the regulations that have been laid down solely by the institution.

(3) The regulations and important amendments if any shall allow for necessary transition measures.

(4) The regulations and the PhD programmes shall be made publicly available on the website of each institution.

Part 11 *Other regulations*

31. (1) The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation may permit deviations from this ministerial order when justified by special circumstances or as part of an innovative project. In the latter case, the ministry shall decide the duration of the innovative project and how the report on the project shall be worked out.

32. (1) In individual cases where quite special circumstances call for it, the Vice-chancellor (Rector) of the institution may permit deviations from this ministerial order acting upon a proposal from the body awarding the PhD degree.

33. (1) Complaints about decisions taken by the institution in accordance with this ministerial order may be brought before the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation if the complaint relates to legal questions. The complaint shall be submitted to the institution in question which will then express in a statement its opinion on the question. The complainant shall be given a period of at least two weeks to comment on the statement. The institution shall refer the complaint to the ministry accompanied by its opinion on the question and any comments from the complainant.

(2) The deadline for the submission of a complaint under subsection (1) shall be two weeks after the complainant has been notified about the decision.

Part 12 *Entry into force and transition measures*

34. (1) This ministerial order shall take effect from 1 May 2002.

(2) At the same time the ministerial order no. 989 of 11 December 1992 on the PhD degree shall be rescinded, cf. subsections (3) and (4).

(3) PhD students who have commenced their PhD studies before 1 May 2002 have the right to complete

their PhD studies in accordance with the terms of the ministerial order no. 989 of 11 December 1992, but the submission and defence of the thesis as well as the decision on the award of a PhD degree shall be carried out in accordance with the terms of the present ministerial order.

(4) Authors who have submitted their thesis before 1 May 2002 have the right to be assessed, to defend and to be awarded the PhD degree in accordance with the ministerial order no. 989 of 11 December 1992.

(5) The institution shall determine transition rules for PhD students and authors as mentioned in subsections (3) and (4) but who wish to complete their PhD studies or have their theses assessed in accordance with the terms of the present ministerial order.

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, 8 March 2002

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