



# **POSTGRADUATE DEGREES STUDY GUIDE 2022-2024**



University of Lapland, Faculty of Law

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The postgraduate degree offered by the Faculty of Law is **Doctor of Laws** (LL.D. or LLD). The students who have been granted a study right to pursue a **Licentiate of Laws** (LLLic) before 19.5.2021 should complete their degree by the end of the year 2025. These study guidelines only apply to the Doctor of Laws (LLD) degree. Students currently undergoing the LL.Lic degree should refer to the previous version of the study guidelines 16 October 2020.

Pursuing an LLD degree at the Faculty of Law comprises supervised research and research training based on the student's personal study plan (PSP). Completing an LLD degree requires self-management and a considerable degree of independent work on the part of the student. During the postgraduate studies, the student will participate in research training such as seminars and other courses and will write a licentiate thesis or a doctoral dissertation. The LLD degree is designed to promote the development of independent scientific thinking and research work.

According to the Government Decree on University Degrees, the aim of postgraduate degrees is that the student

- becomes well-versed in his/her own field of research and its social significance and gains knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific research methods independently and critically and to produce new scientific knowledge within his/her field of research;
- becomes conversant with the development, basic problems and research methods of his/her own field of research; and
- gains such knowledge of the general theory of science and of other disciplines relating to his/her own field of research as enables him/her to follow developments in them.

The Doctor of Laws (LLD) degree is intended for those pursuing a career in research or as a legal expert. The normative time frame for completing a doctoral degree is four years of full-time postgraduate study (240 ECTS credits).

The LLD degree is designed to promote the development of the postgraduate student's ability to conduct in-depth analyses of legally relevant situations. Often this means formulating and investigating research questions that extend into more than one field within the discipline of law. Many issues might also require familiarity with other academic disciplines.

## 2. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

### 2.1. Deadlines and Preliminary Considerations

There are two application periods for postgraduate degree programmes per year:

- **Spring:** application period for **from 7 February 2023 to 28 February 2023**. The right to pursue the degree will become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August.

- **Autumn:** application period **from 2 October 2023 to 24 October 2023**. The right to pursue the degree will become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

On special grounds, the right to pursue an LLD degree may be granted outside the official application periods.

Applications are to be submitted via the Studyinfo (Opintopolku) portal. More detailed information on the application deadlines can be found on the web pages of the University of Lapland and the Faculty of Law.

Prospective LLD students are first advised to discuss the research topic with a professor, assistant/adjunct professor, or university lecturer who is a member of the staff of the Faculty of Law at the University of Lapland. On the basis of the discussion, a reasoned proposal for suitable supervisor(s) for the postgraduate degree may be put forward.

## **2.2. Eligibility**

### **2.2.1. General**

The right to pursue an LLD degree may be granted to applicants holding a Licentiate of Laws (LL.Lic.), a Master of Laws (LLM), or a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree or, where sufficient grounds can be presented, to an applicant who has completed another university degree in Finland or abroad. Eligibility for admission is presented in detail below.

Applicants must demonstrate that they fulfil the requirements necessary for completing the doctoral degree. The applications are to be addressed to the Faculty and the admission decision is made by the Dean.

In their application, the applicant will be required to:

- designate the major subject of the doctorate and their research topic;
- provide an account of their qualifications for completing the doctorate (e.g. a copy of a diploma, a CV, a tentative plan for financing their studies, as well as any statements from their future supervisor(s) or other experts); and
- present a research plan and a personal study plan (PSP).

The research plan is the most important component of the application and should be prepared carefully. A good research proposal contains not only an analytical presentation of the research theme but also an account of the methodology and implementation of the research. Additional information on how to draw up the research plan can be found in the relevant faculty guidelines. The research proposal must contain a statement on whether the thesis will be completed as a monograph or as an article compilation.

An application can only be accepted if the Faculty has a person who is suitable for and willing to take on the task of supervisor.

## **2.2.2. Eligibility of applicants holding a degree in a field other than law**

Postgraduate degrees in law are based on profound legal expertise. The contents of the degrees have been planned in view of applicants who hold a basic degree in the field.

Notwithstanding, the right to complete an LLD degree can be granted to an applicant who holds a higher university degree or relevant higher degree from a university of applied sciences in a field other than law if the applicant is deemed to have sufficient capacity for postgraduate studies in law. Also eligible are persons whom the Faculty considers to have the requisite knowledge and capacity to pursue an LLD. An application for the right to complete a postgraduate degree must include an account of this knowledge and capacity.

## **2.2.3. Eligibility for admission based on a foreign degree**

Applicants seeking the right to complete postgraduate studies based on a foreign degree must attach to their application a certified copy of their diploma and of all other certificates on which their application is based. If a certificate has been issued in a language other than Finnish, Swedish or English, the application must include an official translation of the document into one of these languages. Under special circumstances, the Dean may accept certificates in other languages.

The postgraduate-level instruction provided by the Faculty of Law is primarily given in Finnish and English. Applicants seeking the right to pursue postgraduate studies based on a foreign degree are required to demonstrate that they are capable of completing the degree in question and that they have a good knowledge of Finnish or English.

The language skills are assessed in accordance with the language proficiency requirements of the University or in another manner approved by the Dean. Under special circumstances, the Dean may decide that good skills or a master's degree in a language other than Finnish, Swedish or English is sufficient to fulfil the language requirement.

## **2.3. Admission, Approval, and Appointment of Supervisor(s)**

After an application has been submitted, if necessary, the applicant will be asked to provide supplementary information. Thereafter, the Dean decides whether the applicant is granted the right to study.

If the decision is **negative**, the applicant should review their application and resubmit it during a following admission period. A negative admission decision may also be appealed through the procedure described in the Universities Act.

If the decision is **positive**, the Dean

- approves the major subject of the degree;
- approves the applicant's personal study plan (PSP);
- approves the applicant's research plan; and

- appoints the supervisor(s).

The Dean confirms the proposed supervisor(s), or if no proposal has been made, appoints a suitable person who has agreed to take on the responsibility. The appointment requires both the supervisor's written commitment to the task and the student's consent to the arrangement.

As a rule, **two supervisors** (a primary and a secondary supervisor) are appointed for an LLD student. At least one of them must be employed by the University of Lapland. One of the supervisors must be appointed as the primary supervisor. In order to qualify as the primary supervisor, the person must be

- a tenured professor;
- an acting professor who has completed a doctorate; or
- an associate/adjunct professor (docents);

The secondary supervisor can be any relevant expert with a doctoral degree.

### **3. SUPERVISION AND PERSONAL STUDY PLAN**

Postgraduate students and their supervisor(s) agree on a **personal study plan (PSP)**, which then serves as a collaborative tool between them. The basis for the PSP is the initial study plan that students submit to the Faculty for approval at the beginning of their studies. The content and updating of the plan are agreed on by the student and the supervisor(s). The PSP must include

- the motivation for and objectives of the student's postgraduate studies;
- the timetable for completing the degree; and
- a communications plan between the student and the supervisor(s).

Students who intend to complete their thesis as a compilation must also present a plan regarding the thesis as a whole and indicate the topics of the individual articles or other sub-studies.

Supervisory meetings are arranged as follows:

- Depending on the student's need for supervision, but at least once per academic term.
- The purpose is to discuss the progress of the student's research, including challenges.
- In each meeting, the PSP will be updated.

Supervision is arranged in accordance with the Faculty's guidelines that are based on recommendations by the University's Teaching and Research Council. The guidelines are distributed to all supervisors and they are available in PDF format on the faculty web pages.

## **4. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF STUDIES**

### **4.1. General**

Completing an LLD degree at the Faculty of Law requires initiative and a considerable degree of independent work on the part of the student. The doctoral dissertation is a demonstration of the student's ability to independently and critically apply the methods of scientific research and to create new scientific knowledge. Students have supervision available throughout their studies and their progress is monitored.

During their studies students attend lectures and/or seminars, participate in other education organized by the Faculty or accepted as fulfilling the degree requirements, and write their thesis. Postgraduate education is designed to improve the students' ability to think scientifically and to conduct research independently. An additional aim is to better prepare the students to work in expert duties in the field of law outside of the university.

#### **4.2. The structure of the degrees**

1. Advanced Studies  Elective Studies (20 ECTS)	20 ECTS
2. Method, Theory, and History  A) Method (5 ECTS)  B) Theory (5 ECTS)  C) History (5 ECTS)  D) Elective studies (5 ECTS)	20 ECTS
3. Academic Expertise  A) Teaching Experience (5 ECTS)  B) Internationalization (5 ECTS)  C) Mid-term Review or Workshop (5 ECTS)	20 ECTS

D) Elective Studies (5 ECTS)	
4. Doctoral Dissertation	180 ECTS

### 4.3. The Content of Studies

#### 4.3.1. Advanced Studies (20 ECTS)

##### Objectives:

The aim of the advanced studies is to increase students' knowledge of the field in which they are writing their thesis, in particular the general theories and special issues connected with their chosen research topic.

It is recommended that students complete the advanced studies at the beginning of their postgraduate study, as they provide a basis for the upcoming research.

##### Requirements:

Advanced studies are completed in a manner agreed with the supervisor(s). The starting point is a wide range of involvement in academic activity relating to the student's chosen field and topic.

In cases where the number of ECTS is not determined by the institution offering the learning activity, the teacher in charge determines the number. In doing so, the **credit equivalence table** is used as a guide.

It is also possible to complete advanced studies through literature examinations, the material for which is to be agreed on with the supervisor(s). The requirements for written literature examinations are determined for each student individually according to his/her needs. The basic



rule in planning the literature exams is that one study point corresponds to some 200 pages of reading material. Some of the literature required must be in a foreign language.

**Responsible teacher:**

The postgraduate student's primary supervisor. If the primary supervisor is not a Faculty member, the Dean or another member of the academic staff appointed by the Dean carries out the task.

### **4.3.2. Method, Theory and History (20 ECTS)**

**Objectives:**

Having completed the Method, Theory and History study component, the postgraduate student is able to:

- identify issues relating to the methods used in legal research;
- grasp the status and significance of the doctrine of the sources of law;
- apply general methodological considerations to his or her research topic;
- identify and apply theoretical discussions to his/her research topic; and
- recognize the legal historical dimensions of his/her research topic.

It is recommended that students start the study component at the beginning of their postgraduate study, as they provide a basis for the upcoming research.

**Requirements:**

Method (A) and Theory (B) study modules are generally completed by participating in research seminars, such as the bi-annual Postgraduate Seminar in Legal Studies, arranged by the Faculty of Law. Alternatively, the student may complete the modules by participating in relevant courses or seminars arranged by the Graduate School of the University of Lapland or other institutions. The required courses cannot be completed solely by taking a literature examination or by writing an essay. However, the modules may be completed in part through an essay, where this will form part of the student's thesis.

C) The Legal History module advances the postgraduate student's knowledge of legal history as it bears on his/her research topic. The studies are built around three components: general legal and societal history, history of a particular area of law, and international legal history. The module may be completed by taking a literature examination, by writing essays, by participating in courses, lectures, or seminars, or by other means agreed on an individual basis.

D) In the Elective Studies module, the student is free to define the learning content in a manner that best supports his/her postgraduate research. The content is determined in the same way as that of the three modules described above (legal methods, theory, or history); for example, a student interested in legal theory may complete 5 additional ECTS in legal theory. The module

can be completed by taking a literature examination, by writing essays, by participating in courses, lectures, or seminars, or by other means agreed on an individual basis.

In cases where the number of ECTS is not determined by the institution offering the learning activity, the teacher in charge determines the number. In doing so, the **credit equivalence table** is used as a guide.

#### **Teacher in charge:**

The teacher in charge of the Modules A, B and D (Method, Theory and Elective) is Professor Rosa Maria Ballardini.

The teacher in charge of the Module C (History) is Professor Kirsi Kuusikko.

### **4.3.3. Academic Expertise (20 ECTS)**

#### **Objectives:**

The overarching goal of the Academic Expertise component is to activate the students to take part in various academic events and activities and thus to help them become members of the academic community. More specifically, the component is designed to improve their skills in giving presentations in scientific forums, writing academic articles, and pursuing opportunities to do research abroad. An additional objective is to better prepare the students to work in legal expert duties outside of the university.

#### **Requirements:**

A) The required Teaching Experience may be acquired by participating in teaching duties at the University of Lapland or some other university. In addition to teaching proper, credit may be awarded for activities in support of teaching (e.g. work as a teacher-tutor), for planning of teaching, and for arranging further education. Credit for studies in university pedagogy may also be included in this module.

B) The Internationalisation module may be completed by participating in seminars abroad, doing research abroad, or publishing in international publications.

C) The Mid-Term Review module is completed by default by organizing a mid-term review of the doctoral candidate's dissertation, whereby an invited reviewer from outside the Faculty assesses the dissertation manuscript or a part of it. Further information on the mid-term review is available at the Faculty of Law web pages. If no mid-term review has been arranged, the module may also be completed by organizing a workshop prior to the publication of the dissertation, which involves experts from outside the Faculty. The arrangements for the workshop are made on a case-by-case basis between the student, their supervisor(s), and the Faculty.

D) Students can choose the content of the Elective Studies module according to their own needs. The module may be completed by participating in courses and seminars offered by the University

of Lapland, including the Graduate School, or other institutions (e.g. writing skills; scientific communication; legal information management skills; and presentation, negotiation, project management and pedagogical skills); by attending scientific seminars and other comparable events; by writing academic publications; by conducting research abroad; or by gaining teaching experience. Credit may also be obtained by practicing in a field of law that supports the student's research and writing a report on this experience.

In cases where the number of ECTS is not determined by the institution offering the learning activity, the teacher in charge determines the number. In doing so, the **credit equivalence table** is used as a guide.

#### **Responsible teacher:**

The postgraduate student's primary supervisor. If the primary supervisor is not a Faculty member, the Dean or another member of the academic staff appointed by the Dean carries out the task.

### **4.4. Recording of credit for postgraduate course work**

Students should themselves keep a record of their learning activities, which they intend to use as credit towards the components of the degree, with reference to the **credit equivalence table**.

After a student has in their view completed all the modules (A–D or the appropriate selection thereof) of a component (e.g. Academic Expertise), they should request the teacher(s) in charge to review the studies. The request should be supplemented by an explanation of the completed studies and the amount of ECTS they should yield. The teacher will then ask the faculty office to record the completed studies.

### **4.5. Credit equivalence table**

The following list provides an indication of the credit granted for different forms of work and activities that may be applied towards the degree requirements. In unclear and borderline cases, students should contact the teacher responsible for the relevant degree component or module.

Seminars and other:

- Participation (< 10 hours) in a seminar, lectures, reading/study circle, and keeping of a learning journal = 1 ECTS.
- Participation (< 10 hours) in a seminar and presenting one's work = 2 ECTS.
- Participation (≥ 10 hours) in a seminar or the like = 1 ECTS.
- Participation (≥ 10 hours) in a seminar and presenting one's work = 3 ECTS.
- Conducting research work abroad = 1 ECTS/week; total maximum of 10 ECTS.

Articles (≥ 8 pages) that are **not** part of the LLD thesis:

- Article published in a scientific journal or an article manuscript judged to be of publishable standard by the student's supervisor = 3 ECTS.
- Article published in a Finnish peer-reviewed journal = 5 ECTS.
- Article published in an international peer-reviewed journal = 7 ECTS.

Credit for articles is granted as supplementary and therefore should not be compared to the credit granted for articles as part of a dissertation.

The amount of credit received for teaching experience or other pedagogical activity is determined on a case-by-case basis. In assessing the amount of credit, attention is given to how demanding the teaching duties were and to the amount of preparation they required. The basic assessment is that 10 hours of teaching and the associated preparation equals 5 ECTS.

#### **4.6. Certificate of a Doctor's Degree**

The certificate of a doctor's degree is applied with a non-formal application with an attachment stating that all required studies have been completed (e.g. a transcript). The certificate is granted by the dean of the Faculty.

### **5. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

#### **5.1. General**

The doctoral dissertation (180 ECTS) is the most important component of the doctoral degree. The dissertation must demonstrate the author's ability to independently apply scientific research methods, the author's sound knowledge of the chosen field, and the author's profound familiarity with the topic of his or her research. Prior to the assessment of the doctoral dissertation, the doctoral candidate must defend it publicly.

The recommended length of a doctoral thesis submitted as a monograph is **250 to 300 pages** (12-point font, line spacing 1.5, not counting pages with lists).

Alternatively, the doctoral dissertation may be composed of a number of peer-reviewed scientific publications. In such cases:

- The publications must deal with different aspects of the same problematic.
- The recommended amount of publications is 4 articles published or accepted. The publications should reflect the appropriate amount and quality of work expected for a doctoral dissertation.
- The publications may be jointly authored. The doctoral candidate must be the leading or only author of at least two (2) articles. The doctoral candidate's independent contribution shall be clearly demonstrated.

- It is recommended that the articles are published with publishers that are at least at the Jufo level 1 at the time of the publication, or in high quality journals (peer-reviewed articles in journals [A1] or book chapters [A3]).
- The publications must be presented with a summary part providing a synthesis of the work. The recommended minimum length for the summary synthesis is 50 pages.

## **5.2. Examination and permission to defend the dissertation**

### **5.2.1. Starting the examination procedure**

The examination must be set apart from the instruction process. The examination is an external quality control method carried out by the academic community. Its purpose is to ensure that the research fulfils the criteria of scientific research and writing. The examination procedure begins as follows:

- 1) The student should first seek informal approval from the supervisor(s) that the dissertation is ready for examination. Where two supervisors have been designated, it is primarily the primary supervisor who judges whether the examination may begin.
  - The supervisor has an obligation to make sure that the work fulfils the requirements set for a doctoral dissertation.
  - The supervisor is responsible for seeing to it that the quality of the language in thesis is of the standard required in a doctorate.
  - If necessary, the supervisor is to advise the student to ensure that the language is checked and proofread appropriately.
- 2) Having received informal approval, the student should request the supervisor(s) to start negotiating on suitable examiners with the Head of Administration and other relevant parties. The student may comment on the selection.
- 3) The Chief of Administration asks the student to issue a request to the Faculty Council to appoint the examiners for the dissertation. The student must note in the request that (s)he has no objections to appointing the planned examiners.
- 4) The primary supervisor issues a statement to the Council recommending that the thesis be examined.
- 5) Having received the request and the statement, the Faculty Council decides on appointing the examiners.

As a rule, the request to appoint the examiners should not be processed until the supervisor's statement has been issued. If the student so insists, examiners may be appointed even where the primary supervisor has not approved starting the examination. In such cases, the Faculty Council will request a statement on the matter from the student's supervisor(s).

### **5.2.2. Selecting the examiners**

The principal criterion in appointing examiners is to find persons with the requisite expertise for the task. Their common expertise must cover the field(s) of research of the dissertation.

Other criteria include the following:

- Only individuals who have completed a doctoral degree or a foreign degree of comparable standard may act as examiners.
- At least one of the examiners must be a member of an institution other than the Faculty of Law at the University of Lapland.
- Interaction between the Finnish and international scientific communities should be promoted in the examination process, and it is therefore recommended that foreign experts act as examiners.
- At least one of the examiners should nevertheless be familiar with Finnish academic practices and the assessment criteria for doctoral dissertations.
- Both examiners may be from universities outside Finland if suitable experts cannot be found in Finland or if the engagement of two international examiners can be justified on other grounds.

### 5.2.3. Examination

The examiners' task is to determine whether the manuscript submitted for acceptance as a doctoral thesis meets the standards for such a work. Each examiner delivers an assessment of the manuscript to the Faculty Council in the form of a written statement. A joint statement is also possible.

In their statement the examiners should discuss **whether and to what extent** the dissertation:

- demonstrates knowledge of the field of law and the topic;
- presents new scientific information;
- argues convincingly, justifying its results;
- represents independent and critical research;
- demonstrates the ability to apply scientific research methods in the field;
- is structured appropriately;
- is delimited appropriately;
- is written in clear, correct, and appropriate language;
- is finalized appropriately; and
- complies with the ethical standards of scientific research.

The examiner statement

- must express unambiguously whether or not the manuscript fulfils the criteria for a doctoral dissertation;
- must express unambiguously whether or not the candidate should be granted permission to publicly defend the thesis;
- must present grounds for positive as well as for negative statements;
- may suggest changes to the manuscript. However, making the suggested corrections cannot be set as a requirement for an examiner statement recommending permission to defend the thesis. The examiners' opinion cannot therefore be conditional.

Comments specifying the statements can be directly presented to the doctoral candidate.

A formal statement on whether or not the thesis is approved for being publicly defended is submitted to the faculty council for decision-making. It is recommended that the formal statement is at least 3 pages.

Normally the examiners are given two months' time for their task, during which period the doctoral candidate may not make changes in the manuscript. The examination procedure may be extended for a reasonable time after the prescribed deadline. The conditions for this are as follows:

- Extensions of the examination period must be reported either orally or in writing to the Dean and the Faculty office.

If the examination results in statements recommending that the thesis be accepted, the procedure is as follows:

- 1) The candidate must request the Faculty Council to grant her or him the permission to defend the thesis. In the request, the candidate must indicate that the statements recommended the permission and that (s)he has no objections to the statements.
- 2) Upon receiving the request, the Faculty Council decides, on the basis of the statements, whether or not to grant permission to defend the thesis. If the candidate is granted permission, he or she has the right to defend the manuscript in a public defence.
- 3) Having been granted the permission, the candidate must request the Faculty Council to decide the date of the defence and appoint the opponent, the custos, and an assessment board. In the same request, if (s)he so desires, the candidate must request the dissertation to be published in the University of Lapland's *Acta electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis* series.
- 4) The Faculty Council decides the date of the defence and appoints the opponent(s), the custos and an assessment board, and whether the dissertation is accepted for publication in the series *Acta electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis*.

If the statements disagree or fail to specify whether the dissertation should be accepted, the Faculty Council may

- request the examiners to specify their statements; or
- acquire additional information in support of its decision; or
- obtain a third statement.

If neither statement recommends that permission should be granted to defend the thesis or if either of the examiners does not deliver the statement within the prescribed time and no other arrangement is made, the examination procedure will lapse. In such a case, the doctoral candidate may turn to the Faculty Council and request a new examination when the changes to the manuscript indicated in a statement rejecting the work or other changes have been made.

### **5.3. Public Distribution of the Doctoral Dissertation**

The degree candidate is to ensure that the thesis is publicly distributed prior to the defence.

Dissertations published by the University of Lapland are primarily published in the University of Lapland's Acta electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis series.

- This takes place in open access electronic format through the University's institutional repository Lauda.
- Publishing the dissertation in this way is free of charge to the doctoral candidate, but the candidate may order printed copies on their own expense.
- The Faculty may also decide to publish the doctoral dissertation in printed format in the Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis series. In this case the Faculty will make a separate decision on the publishing costs.

Alternatively, the doctoral candidate may choose to publish the dissertation with another publisher.

- In this case the candidate is personally responsible for the possible costs of publication, its public distribution, and providing the Faculty with the adequate number of copies of the dissertation.
- If the thesis is published solely in electronic form, it must be published in an electronic publication series approved by the University of Lapland, some other university, or a commercial publisher. This series must have publishing practices with clear, established, and publicly available rules and standards.

The degree candidate must always provide the University with a required number of copies of the thesis. If the thesis has been published in electronic form only, the Faculty will inform the candidate before the public examination and approval of the thesis in what form the work must be submitted to the Faculty. The candidate should be prepared to provide the required number of copies of the thesis to the Faculty in bound, paper form.

## **5.4. The Defence and Final Assessment**

### **5.4.1. The Opponent, the Custos, and the Assessment board**

The selection criteria for the opponent at the defence are the same as those for the examiners. Normally, one of the examiners is appointed as the opponent. Two opponents may be appointed where necessary. The assessment of degree work should also be a forum for encouraging interaction between the international and national scientific communities. In assessing the standard of the doctoral thesis on the basis of the examination and the defence, it must be ensured that the criteria applied in the assessment are those used in Finland.

The supervisor of the work or a professor of the subject or a related subject may act as the custos. The custos must be employed by the University.



Unless special reasons exist for proceeding otherwise, the assessment board will be composed of the opponent(s), the examiners, the Custos, the candidate's supervisor(s), and the tenured professor of the relevant subject at the University of Lapland.

#### **5.4.2. The Defence**

The practicalities relating to the public examination of the dissertation (the defence) are explained in detail at the University of Lapland web pages.

The custos opens and closes the public examination. The custos functions as the chair and makes sure that the doctoral candidate is allowed an immediate reply to each remark. The custos ensures the discussion does not deviate too much from the subject. If the examination lasts more than two hours, it is the duty of the custos to announce a break. The custos leads the discussion with the audience.

The opponent's role in the is to examine the dissertation orally, paying attention to the different themes of the work. At the beginning of the examination, the opponent usually focuses on methodological and general questions. This is followed by a more detailed analysis. The public examination of a dissertation may last a maximum of 4 hours.

#### **5.4.3. The Assessment**

The custos is in contact with the opponent(s) and attends to the progress of the evaluation process. Within six weeks of the defence, the opponent must submit to the Faculty Council a statement either accepting or rejecting the dissertation. The opponent must present the grounds for his or her assessment. The assessment criteria is the same as the one used in the examination.

The assessment board appointed by the Faculty Council submits a proposal in which it either supports or opposes approval of the doctoral dissertation.

No grade is awarded for an approved doctoral dissertation. If a dissertation is considered particularly commendable, the assessment board, while disclosing the grounds for the proposal in its statement, may propose that the Faculty Council assess the dissertation as "approved with distinction".

Before the dissertation is assessed, the candidate is reserved an opportunity to reply to the opponent's statement.

Based on the statements, the Faculty Council decides on approving the dissertation.