

## **Preliminary examination of the doctoral thesis - a guide to an instructor and doctoral candidate**

A doctoral candidate is responsible for the contents of the doctoral thesis manuscript taken to preliminary examination. The instructor(s) are responsible for the manuscript being of a such level that it can be taken to preliminary examination. In the case of article-based dissertation the instructor is responsible for the articles and their mediums of publication being compliant to criteria accepted by the faculty. The instructor decides if a language consultation is needed for the doctoral thesis manuscript.

The manuscript is examined by plagiarism recognition system (Urkund) before it is sent to preliminary examination. The instructor and doctoral candidate are recommended to look together through the report of the plagiarism recognition system. The instructor is responsible for the interpretation of the results and takes written information/report to the office of the faculty before nomination of preliminary examiners.

Before the beginning of the preliminary examination containing an artistic production a doctoral candidate should have a permission to publish the artistic production given by the instructor. The instructor must have a written explanation of the status of artistic production in the dissertation written by doctoral candidate while handling the permission of publication.

### **Nomination of preliminary examiners**

According to the administrative rules and regulations of the University of Lapland the Faculty Council nominates preliminary examiners of doctoral theses. At the minimum two preliminary examiners are always nominated.

According to the established practice a preliminary examiner is mainly from outside the university. An adjunct professor of the faculty, who is not employed at the university is regarded an outsider. A preliminary examiner can not be from the own faculty.

Internationality of doctoral education is supported. Consequently a foreign expert as a preliminary examiner is recommended. Nomination of a domestic academic expert to be the other preliminary examiners (if possible) guarantees that there is a person knowing Finnish scientific practice and evaluation criteria of doctoral dissertations in the preliminary examination process.

Preliminary examiner of a manuscript or artistic production must have either qualification of a doctor or adjunct professor or special knowledge on the field of the doctoral thesis.

The instructor of the doctoral thesis can never be a preliminary examiner.

The incompetence regulations of the Administrative law (434/2003) are enforced in every actions of the university. Requirements of incompetence have to be considered at preliminary examination process. The Administrative law (434/2003, § 27-28) is valid concerning incompetence of preliminary examiners. For instance close family connections or a very close friendship create an incompetence. In addition for instance compact collaboration projects or applying for the same position create an incompetence. Furthermore, a polemical relationship, out of which a strong evidence must exist, creates an incompetence.

Therefore, a person who is either to the doctoral candidate, instructor or someone else concerned in such a relationship, which can challenge his/her neutrality, can not be a preliminary examiner.

A preliminary examiner can not be

- a person, who is a co-author in some publication being part of the doctoral thesis
- a person, who has research co-operation with the doctoral candidate for the time being or who has had it during the doctoral thesis project
- a person, who has close research work with the instructor of the doctoral thesis during the three previous years of the examination
- a relative of the doctoral candidate
- an immediate superior or immediate subordinate of the doctoral candidate or instructor
- a person, who is applying for the same position than the doctoral candidate.

### **Starting the preliminary examination procedure**

**The preliminary examination procedure starts, when a doctoral candidate, after having heard the instructor, applies for preliminary examination of his/her doctoral thesis.** The application is taken to the office of the faculty. The instructor is responsible for the work being at such a level that it can be taken to preliminary examination. Before the beginning of the preliminary examination procedure of an artistic part, the instructor authorizes the publication of an artistic production.

According to the decision of the Rector of the University of Lapland 12.6.2020 doctoral theses are filed ja published electronically from 1.8.2020 on. An author may still have his/her thesis printed for his/her own use at his/her own expense if he/she wants.

While applying for preliminary examination an electronic version of manuscript of doctoral thesis or articles for the article-based dissertation together with an introduction part and summary of the manuscript is taken to the office of the faculty. When the research contains an artistic production the application of preliminary examination must contain an explanation based on which a preliminary examiner is able to form an opinion of the status of the artistic part in the dissertation, more specifically said, what is the relationship between the scientific and the artistic part in terms of content and scope and the way in which they are connected.

It is the duty of an instructor to ask for preliminary examiners approval to the task, even though the actual decision is made by the faculty council on the grounds of written proposal of the instructor.

A written proposal of an instructor taken to the Head of Administration of the faculty must contain following information:

- Author, name and form of the doctoral thesis, information of instructors
- Name, degree, contact information (address and email address) of the preliminary examiner
- Grounds of the preliminary examiner; how expertise of the preliminary examiner is related to the subject/research are of the doctoral thesis
- CV of the preliminary examiner (bare CV is not a sufficient ground)

Corresponding written information with grounds concerning proposal of preliminary examiner of artistic production must be taken to the Head of Administration as well. The expertise of the preliminary examiner proposed for the task must come out.

The doctoral candidate is given an opportunity to give a statement on the preliminary examiners proposed before the decision of the faculty council concerning choosing preliminary examiners. The office of the faculty takes the doctoral thesis to preliminary examiners.

### **Task of the preliminary examiner**

Concerning quality assurance of doctoral theses the preliminary examiner has considerable responsibility on not permitting too incomplete works to the public defense stage. It is very problematic on the students' legal protections point of view if it is noticed first at the public defense of a doctoral thesis that the work does not fulfill the minimum requirements of a doctoral thesis.

In preliminary examination it is made sure if the proposed manuscript fulfills the qualification requirements set to a doctoral thesis and if the scientific level of the work is high enough. **The preliminary examiners must state in their written statement whether the dissertation meets the criteria for granting permission to a public examination or whether the preliminary examiner proposes denial of the permission to a public examination.** Preliminary examination statement must always be justified. The preliminary examiner has to have the grading scale of doctoral thesis decided at the faculty (pass with distinction, pass, fail) even though a preliminary examiner is not supposed to give the manuscript a grade.

A preliminary examiner may propose amendment in his/her statement, but the statement can not be conditional in such a way that amendments suggested in it would be a precondition for giving permission to a public examination. In case the preliminary statements are not recommendable, the manuscript returns to the instruction process.

The preliminary examiner of an artistic production (or parts of it) states if he/she recommends acceptance of the artistic production to be part of the doctoral thesis. When the research contains an artistic production, the assessment focuses on artistic know-how, documentation of the artistic process and the way in which the artistic production is related to the research argumentation.

Preliminary examiners must give their statements mainly within **two months** after having received the manuscript.

## From permission to a public examination to public defense

After having got recommendable preliminary examination statements a doctoral candidate has to apply for permission to a public defense. The application is taken to the office of the faculty to the Head of Administration by email (firstname.lastname@ulapland.fi). The faculty council grants doctoral candidate the permission to public defense, nominates the opponent and custodian and decides the date of the public defense.

While preparing an application of the time of public defense, the instructor and doctoral candidate have to take into account the guidelines of the university doctoral school. According to it **at least two months from giving permission to a public examination has to be reserved for organizing the public defense.**

Doctoral school must be informed of the permission to a public examination (dissertations(at)ulapland.fi) **two months before the date of public defense.** At this stage the contents of the doctoral thesis should be ready. The doctoral school is according to its instructions accompanying planning of the doctoral thesis and, **for instance a maker-up ought to have at least 7 weeks for the make-up.**

More specific and current information for the doctoral candidate as well as library's information of publishing the doctoral thesis <https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Research/Doctoral-education>.

The doctoral thesis has to be published at the minimum 10 days before the date of public defense. The electronic version of doctoral thesis is exhibited at the **university front page** and printed copy to the university main hall.

Administrative Secretary of the faculty gives a doctoral candidate written information concerning arrangements of the public defense. Administrative Secretary takes care of travelling and accommodation of the opponent and helps with other practical matters as well as informs custodian and opponent of the arrangements.

Enclosed grading scale of doctoral thesis of the Faculty of Art and Design (Faculty Council of the Faculty of Art and Design 17.3.2016).