Doctoral Schools Rules

Mandatory read for all new PhD students at the Technical Doctoral School of IT and Design

The document contains valuable information regarding the structure of the Doctoral School, rules and regulations, processes and timeframes. It is suggested that you read this document when you commence your PhD study.
# Guide to the Procedure in Connection with the Completion of a PhD Programme

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Introduction

The overall aim of the Faculty of Engineering and Science, by means of the Doctoral School of Engineering and Science and the Doctoral Programmes, is to provide a programme of education leading to the granting of a PhD degree at an international level of academic competence.

A precondition for the attainment of a PhD degree is that the PhD programme includes integration in the relevant research environment and that as a consequence, international communication and exchange of scientific information occur. The central element of the PhD programme will be the completion of a scientific research project and the preparation of an academic thesis.

The overall responsibility for the PhD programmes in the field of engineering and science in terms of education, research activity, economic aspects as well as operational responsibility is placed with the Doctoral School of the Faculty. The awarding of the PhD degree is placed with the Academic Council of Engineering and Science.

The terms of reference for the PhD programmes are defined by the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme at the Universities, and the Rules of the Doctoral School of Engineering and Science.

A PhD programme comprises 5 major components:

- Carry out independent research work under supervision
- Participation in courses (lectures, seminars, etc.)
- Residence at/co-operation with both internal and external research environments
- Gain experience in teaching or other forms of scientific knowledge dissemination
- Completion and documentation of an academic research project

At the conclusion of the PhD programme, the PhD student will be required to provide documentation that all of the above components have been successfully fulfilled. The first four parts are documented by means of a statement to the Faculty by the principal supervisor of the PhD student. Documentation for the final part is provided by means of an evaluation of the thesis and its defence, according to the procedures and requirements defined in the Ministerial Order.

The PhD programmes for the PhD degree are of three years' duration, and are offered in a number of research areas (each with its own Head of Doctoral Programme). The current doctoral programmes are listed in Appendix 1.
Organisation

The Academic Council
The Academic Council at the Technical Faculty of IT and Design at Aalborg University award the PhD degree according to the Act on Universities.

The Doctoral School
The Doctoral School is an independently organised unit, established by the Technical of IT and Design Science at Aalborg University. The Doctoral School has the overall general responsibility for ensuring that PhD programmes meet the requirements of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation as well as responsibility for the operation and development of doctoral programmes at the Faculty and retains its own budget.

The Doctoral School is organised with a PhD Board with six members, a PhD study director, heads of doctoral programmes as well as supervisors for each research area offered by the Doctoral School.

The PhD Board of the Doctoral School
The PhD Board has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the doctoral programmes offered, for the development of doctoral programmes, and for ensuring that individual PhD programmes comply with the general requirements for PhD programmes. Furthermore, the PhD Board has the overall responsibility for the development of all the activities of the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School is assisted by the Secretariat of the Doctoral School, which is responsible for the administrative implementation of the decisions of the Doctoral School.

The six members of the PhD Board consist of four members of the academic staff of the Doctoral School as well as two PhD students. The four academic staff members represent different areas of research and are elected for a period of four years. The PhD students are elected for a period of one year.

PhD Study Director
The PhD study director is responsible for the development of the Doctoral School as well as the daily operations surrounding the implementation of the PhD programmes in co-operation with the departments and the heads of doctoral programmes. The PhD study director is also responsible for deciding which academic teaching staff can be included in the staff of the Doctoral School. Furthermore the PhD study director participates in the PhD Board meetings.
The Heads of Doctoral Programmes

The heads of doctoral programmes, who refers to the PhD study director, are appointed by the Dean upon approval by the department. The head of the doctoral programme is responsible for ensuring that the PhD programme is carried out in a manner such that the rules of the Ministerial Order are adhered to. This includes the planning of general courses and programme specific courses in co-operation with the PhD Board of the Doctoral School, together with project-related courses in co-operation with the departments. The heads of doctoral programmes have a direct quality assurance function through their work on assessment committees in connection with the awarding of stipends.

The Departments

The organisational responsibility for individual PhD programmes lies with the individual departments of the University. Each PhD student is attached to, and physically located at, one of the departments, which, together with the principal supervisor and the head of the doctoral programme, is responsible for the success of the PhD programme; including the organisation of course activities related to the general part of the PhD programme and to the project. The department is also responsible for planning teaching and dissemination of knowledge activities and allocation of resources necessary for carrying out the scientific research project, ensuring supervision and for travel in connection with communication of knowledge and participation in PhD courses at other universities.

Academic Staff

The staff of the Doctoral School consists of members of the Faculty’s academic staff who satisfy the formal qualifications to function as supervisors of PhD students (professors, readers and associate professors), and who have considerable experience in this role. The PhD study director is responsible for making the decisions on which staff of the Faculty should be admitted as members of the academic staff of the Doctoral School. Such decisions are reached following assessment of documentation upon the individual staff member’s ability to provide the necessary supervision.

Upon registration, a principal supervisor is appointed for each of the PhD students among the Faculty’s full-time academic staff. If not already a member of the staff of the Doctoral School it is a prerequisite that the principal supervisor is approved by the PhD study director. The principal supervisor has the main academic responsibility for the organisation and the implementation of the PhD programme. Furthermore, on behalf of the Faculty, the principal supervisor has the responsibility of ensuring that the formal conditions of the PhD programme have been met. In addition to the principal supervisor, one or several assistant supervisors may be appointed if there are objective reasons for doing so, e.g., specific knowledge or experience. An assistant supervisor does not necessarily have to be a member of the Faculty.
Chronology of a PhD Programme

Notice
The department submits a recommendation for a public advertisement of a PhD stipend to the Faculty, which, after approval by the Dean, advertises the stipend publicly.

Application
An application for a PhD stipend may be sent in reply to a public advertisement and should be forwarded to the Faculty of Engineering and Science through the electronic application system.

In addition to the application, the applicant should upload the following:

Diploma(s), CV, PhD project proposal, list of publications if this is relevant as well as references if relevant.

Processing the Application
The department appoints an expert assessment committee. After consideration of the applications received, recommendation of grants for PhD programmes is sent, via the department, for approval by the Dean of The Faculty of Engineering and Science. Together with the recommendation, the department forwards documentation of the necessary funding, that the department wishes the student to be registered, as well as an acceptance that a full-time professor, an associate professor or a reader will carry out the tasks as principal supervisor.

Allocation of PhD Stipend
The Faculty of Engineering and Science forwards excerpts of the assessment committee’s recommendation to all the applicants. Documents of employment are sent to the successful applicant.

The PhD Programme
No later than 2 months after the date of enrolment, the PhD student must send a PhD study plan for approval to the Head of the Doctoral Programme in which the PhD student is enrolled. The study plan must follow the template found at the website of the Doctoral School. The PhD study plan is prepared by the PhD student in co-operation with the principal supervisor.

This outline of the PhD programme must satisfy the requirements of the general programme for the particular field of research in which the applicant wishes to participate. It is a precondition that research in the chosen area takes place within the Faculty.
No later than 11 months after enrolment in the PhD programme, an updated study plan must be submitted to the Head of the relevant Doctoral Programme for its approval. The updated study plan must be supported by the principal supervisor. The template for the updated plan can be found at the website of The Doctoral School. Generally the study plan must account for how all elements of the PhD programme will be fulfilled. The updated study plan must comprise a description of academic progress and a precise indication of undertakings during the programme’s remainder.

Every six months, the Doctoral School must determine whether or not the PhD study is progressing according to the approved study plan. In case of satisfactory progress, the principal supervisor and the PhD student are to submit a declaration to the Doctoral School, stating the the PhD study proceeds according to schedule. If the PhD project does not proceed according to schedule, this must also be declared to the Doctoral School. The principal supervisor must justify in writing why adjustments are required. Further, the principal supervisor and the PhD student must prepare a detailed plan of action in order to establish satisfactory performance within a 3 month period. This must be approved by the PhD Study Director. In case the lack of performance is due to the PhD student, it is the duty of the principal supervisor to judge whether the performance has been re-established within the 3 month period. If the PhD student is unable to establish satisfactory performance, the registration of the student will be cancelled following the 3 month period.

Completion
The PhD programme is completed by the submission of a PhD thesis following which the PhD student’s enrolment expires. The thesis is submitted to the Faculty and must be publicly presented and defended. The thesis and its defence must be evaluated by an assessment committee. In connection with the submission of the PhD thesis, the principal supervisor must declare that other components of the programme have been successfully completed. The procedure for the finalising of the PhD programme is described in Appendix 3. The assessment committee is appointed by the dean after recommendation from the PhD Board and consists of 3 members, of which 2 must be extramural. The supervisors do not participate in the assessment committee with voting rights, but the principal supervisor should nevertheless always participate in the committee’s evaluation. The assessment committee performs its recommendation in two stages. Initially the committee must form an opinion as to whether the thesis contains qualities making it suitable for defence. If so, the chairman must agree upon a date for the defence, along with the main supervisor. Should the assessment committee form a negative view, the assessment committee shall state in the recommendation whether the PhD thesis may be resubmitted in a revised version. After the defence of the thesis, the
assessment committee sends a general evaluation of the thesis and its defence as well as a recommendation as to whether the degree should be awarded or not.

After the Academic Council has awarded the PhD degree, a PhD diploma will be prepared in Danish and English. The diploma will contain a description of the programme, the title of the thesis, the composition of the assessment committee and other relevant information.
**Interruption or Termination**

**Leave of Absence**
A PhD student has the right to apply for leave of absence from the Doctoral School. Application for leave of absence must be sent to the Doctoral School. Leave of absence will normally be granted in cases of illness, childbirth, military service, etc. Leave of absence means that the applicant’s study programme is prolonged by the duration of the leave of absence. Application for leave must generally be received by the Doctoral School no later than one month before the beginning of the leave.

**Termination**
A PhD student can terminate her/his participation in a PhD programme by a written declaration to the Secretariat of the Doctoral School with 1 month’s notice.
PhD DEGREE WITHOUT PREVIOUS STUDIES

A PhD thesis may be submitted for assessment without prior studies at Aalborg University. This possibility requires the following to be fulfilled: 1) the candidate must have had an active cooperation with one of the Faculty supervisors, and 2) if the PhD student previously has been enrolled as PhD student at another institution, the institution in question must accept that the thesis is submitted at Aalborg University.

The thesis must be accompanied by a description of prior research activities, courses, etc., and a CV. Any co-authored scientific publication, which is used or included as part of the thesis, must be accompanied by a co-author statement signed by all authors, which clearly describes the contributions of all authors.

The thesis and its accompanying documents must be submitted to The Doctoral School of Engineering and Science. The PhD Board will express an opinion as to whether it recommends that the thesis should be accepted for assessment. If so, a statement will be made by a professor, reader or associate professor from the relevant field as to whether the applicant possesses qualifications considered equivalent to those achieved in a 3-year PhD programme, regarding research study courses, experience with the communication of knowledge, as well as contact with several active research environments. It is a prerequisite, that the thesis has not been submitted for assessment at another Institution.

All theses submitted without previous studies may be checked for plagiarism.

Further information may be obtained at
The Secretariat of the Doctoral School
The Faculty of Engineering and Science
Niels Jernes Vej 10, 9220 Aalborg East
Phone: +45 9940 9638
E-mail: doctoral.school@adm.aau.dk
www.phd.teknat.aau.dk
APPENDIX 1

Courses and Financial Support

The Doctoral School offers, in co-operation with the departments, general courses in which PhD students from relevant fields must participate. In addition, programme related courses, primarily within the relevant fields, must be attended. It will be possible to apply for further support towards extraordinary costs aimed at fulfilling the primary goals of the Faculty’s PhD programmes, especially including internationalisation. Costs in connection with longer residence abroad (3-6 months duration) are normally covered by the budget of the Doctoral School upon application.

Course Activities
According to the requirements defined by the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme, the PhD programme must include organised course activities of one half of an academic year’s duration. This is deemed to be equivalent to 30 ECTS credits. As a general rule, at least ten of these credits should come from general courses and at least ten from programme/project related courses.

General Courses
The aim of these courses is to provide the PhD student with the methodical and practical basis for carrying out research and preparing a thesis. The courses are of a general nature and are relevant for all or most PhD programmes. It is recommended that the courses are taken during the first year of study. The courses concern the theories, methods, and ethics of scientific research; the communication of scientific knowledge: patent law, communication in English, as well as other topics of general relevance. The Doctoral School offers general courses, but general courses at the PhD level offered by other institutions may also be taken.

Programme Specific Courses
The aim of the programme specific courses is to provide the PhD student with an advanced theoretical basis within the student’s specific research area. Such PhD level courses may include courses offered by the Doctoral School as well as by other institutions.

Project Related Courses
Project related courses are courses directly related to the research project. The aim of these courses is to provide the PhD student with a direct in-depth insight into the specific research field. Project related courses may be seminars, colloquia, study groups, etc. where PhD students play an active
role. The placing and timetabling of these courses, in the PhD programme, is arranged in co-operation with the student’s principal supervisor.

Information on Courses
All PhD courses offered by the Doctoral School are described at the Doctoral School’s website for courses at the following address:

http://www.phdcourse.aau.dk

Changes to information about courses, which occur during the year, are made on the website. Registration for the Doctoral School’s courses takes place via www.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation
For all PhD courses, a course certificate is issued to participants who have completed the same with a satisfactory result. Quality assurance of the course participants' benefit consists of carrying out a task or other specific evaluation of the course in question. The evaluation is carried out by the person responsible for the course. The quality of the course is evaluated by each participant via a questionnaire/schedule of comments, which is distributed electronically by the Secretariat of The Doctoral School.
APPENDIX 2

Guide to the Procedure in Connection with the Completion of a PhD Programme

1. The principal supervisor submits a proposal for the composition of the assessment committee. This proposal is sent, via the department which adjoins a recommendation or an alternative proposal, to the Doctoral School's Secretariat. The proposal must contain a brief CV for, or other information on, the members of the assessment committee. The proposal must also contain a suggestion as to which of the members should be appointed Chairman of the assessment committee. Normally the Chairman should be from Aalborg University.

2. The assessment committee must have 3 members, of which 2 must be extramural. Members must be professors or associate professors or have equivalent qualifications.

3. In addition to this, the principal supervisor must always participate in the work of the assessment committee, but without voting rights. Other assistant supervisors to the PhD student may also participate in the work of the assessment committee, likewise without voting rights.

4. The Dean appoints an assessment committee upon recommendation from the PhD Board.

5. The PhD student has the right to raise an objection to the composition of the assessment committee within 8 working days, including Saturday, from notification of the composition.

6. If the assessment committee finds the thesis suitable for public defense, a consistent recommendation must be forwarded to the department and a defense date arranged in collaboration with the main supervisor.

7. The Dean appoints a moderator to preside at the public defence upon recommendation of the department.

8. 5 copies of the PhD thesis must be submitted to the Secretariat of the Doctoral School – Niels Jernes Vej 10 not later than 9 weeks before the defence. Furthermore an electronic copy (.pdf – not scanned) must be sent to doctoral.school@adm.aau.dk.
9. Together with the above submission, a statement from the principal supervisor of the PhD programme should be included, confirming that the PhD student has met the requirements of the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme, and the specifications of the student's approved PhD study plan. The statement shall accompany the PhD diploma and should thus include a specification of research study activities. The statement should include a concise specification of the content and extent of course activities, of residence in/co-operation with other research environments, and finally of communication of scientific knowledge. The statement must be available in English. A list of the student’s publications should be enclosed as an appendix.

10. Normally, the thesis should be written in English or Danish and contain a summary in Danish and English. The title of the thesis must equally be available in both Danish and English.

11. If the thesis consists of a number of published papers, for which there is (are) one or more co-authors of parts or the whole, the Faculty must receive a statement from each of the co-authors. This statement must include an account of the PhD student's contribution to the papers. This also applies to monographs which are in some way based on papers.

12. Within two months of the submission of the PhD thesis, the assessment committee shall make its recommendation to the Doctoral School as to whether the PhD thesis fulfils the requirements for the award of the PhD degree.

13. If the recommendation is favourable the chairman of the assessment committee sends the preliminary recommendation to the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School will forward a copy of the preliminary recommendation to the PhD student and the principal supervisor.

14. 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 within a deadline of at least three months. During this period the responsibilities of the supervisors continue.

15. The principal supervisor will ensure that the department prepares and distributes a public notice of the date and venue of the defence of the thesis, including the forwarding of a copy to the Doctoral School’s Secretariat.

16. The Faculty is responsible for the following costs in connection with the assessment of a thesis:
- Travel expenses for members of the assessment committee.
- Payment of fees to the extramural members of the assessment committee.
- Residential costs (1-2 nights in connection with the public defence).

17. The assessment committee makes its recommendation to the Academic Council immediately after the public defence of the thesis.

18. The Doctoral School’s Secretariat forwards a copy of the recommendation to the PhD student, who is requested to forward a brief description in electronical form of the contents of the project (5-6 lines in Danish) to the Doctoral School’s Secretariat in connection with the issue of a press release, when the Academic Council has awarded the PhD degree.