



## **Information regarding the assignment as a member of an examining committee or external reviewer at the Faculty of Science**

This document contains information about the assignment as an external reviewer or member of an examining committee at the public defence of a thesis at the Faculty of Science at Lund University. If you choose to accept the assignment, you need to fill in the form section at the bottom of the next page and return the form to the person who contacted you about the assignment (the form does not require a signature – it can be completed digitally).

### **Swedish third-cycle education**

Swedish third-cycle education comprises four years of full-time study, that is, 240 credits (corresponding to ECTS). According to the Higher Education Ordinance, at least half of the programme is to consist of a thesis, which is examined at a public defence. At the Faculty of Science, the thesis comprises 120–195 credits, depending on the subject, which is defined in the specific subject's general syllabus.

The compilation thesis is the most common type at the Faculty of Science, but monographs are also produced. The dissertation (the summarising chapter of the compilation thesis) is particularly important for the examination, as the research articles usually have several co-authors. The faculty has defined guidelines for how to structure the dissertation (appendix 1).

### **The assignment as a member of an examining committee or external reviewer**

For the defence of a thesis, the faculty appoints an external reviewer and an examining committee, typically consisting of three members. The examining committee examines the thesis and awards it a grade of “pass” or “fail”. The grade is to be awarded for both the written thesis and its public defence. The learning outcomes for third-cycle education are summarised in ten points contained in appendix 2. Out of these 10 outcomes, no. 8 partly falls outside the framework of the thesis and public defence, while the other 9 are covered by the public defence examination. The external reviewer does not take part in the grading; their task is to scrutinise the thesis through a discussion with the doctoral student and thus assist the examining committee in assessing the thesis

and the doctoral student. Once the external reviewer's scrutiny is complete, the members of the examining committee have the opportunity to pose questions to the doctoral student. The audience then also has the opportunity to ask questions. The entire thesis defence is led by a chairperson appointed by the faculty (as a rule, a member of the faculty's teaching staff). The external reviewer is normally expected to give a short presentation of the wider context in which the issue(s) of the thesis belong, as a way of introducing the defence ceremony.

### *Grading*

The grade is determined by the examining committee at a closed meeting that takes place immediately after the defence. The external reviewer and principal supervisor shall be available during this meeting to answer any questions from the committee, but are not to be present when the grade is determined. The grading decision is taken by the members of the examining committee by way of a simple majority. A passing grade can be accompanied by comments from the examining committee, but as a rule a pass is submitted without commentary. A grade of "fail" should always include comments explaining the shortcomings that led to the failure. Individual members have the right to have a dissenting opinion noted in the minutes of the examining committee.

### **Conditions governing the assignment of being a member of an examining committee or external reviewer**

The objectivity of the examining committee or external reviewer at the thesis defence must be beyond question. As an examining committee member or external reviewer, you must therefore have no connection to either the doctoral student or their supervisors. In addition to grounds of conflict of interest (Sections 11-12 of the Administrative Procedure Act, APA), a conflict of interest in the context of a thesis defence may occur if:

- An external reviewer or member of an examining committee, within the past five years, have collaborated academically or co-produced research with the doctoral student or their supervisors. Co-publishing is an example of co-production. (A conflict of interest can be discounted if there is a special justification, e.g. if the collaboration took place within a large research consortium in which co-publishing does not necessarily entail a conflict of interest).
- There has been an extensive collaboration between supervisor and external reviewer or board member, even if this took place longer than five years ago.

If such a collaboration has taken place but you do not feel it forms a ground of conflict of interest, a report justifying why it should not be considered a conflict of interest should be submitted.

- There has been a supervisor-doctoral student relationship between the supervisor and external reviewer or examining committee member, regardless of how long ago it took place.

If you are unsure as to whether the circumstances are such that you may be considered in a conflict of interest, you should discuss this with the person who requested you take on the assignment.

Shortly after the thesis defence, you will receive a short questionnaire about the assignment and we would be grateful if you could respond. Your responses will be anonymous and cannot be linked to the specific thesis defence. The questionnaire serves as an important basis for following up on and enhancing the quality of third-cycle education at the Faculty of Science.

### Confirmation

*I have read the information above and accept the assignment I have been asked to take on.*

Name:

Title:

Affiliation:



## Guidelines for designing a thesis

The doctoral thesis is to be a carefully thought-out and reasoned discussion of a candidate's own work in relation to the broader research field, and can be designed either as a compilation thesis or a monograph.

A compilation thesis consists of attached copies of a number of research articles or manuscripts, along with a summarising chapter. The research articles are to be of a quality corresponding to the requirements for publication in recognised academic journals with peer reviews procedures, and it should be possible to distinguish the doctoral student's contribution in the work.

It is rarely the case that the research papers in a compilation thesis are solely authored by the doctoral student. For this reason, importance should be attached to the summarising chapter that, on the one hand, gives the doctoral student the opportunity to demonstrate an autonomous and independent intellectual performance and, on the other, enables assessment of the doctoral student's autonomous and independent contributions. The summarising chapter is to provide an introduction to the papers and place the issues and results achieved into a general context. The summarising chapter must therefore be written in a different form to the papers in the thesis and must be possible to read as an independent academic text. The summarising chapter must not contain extensive copying of text, figures and tables from the papers compiled in the thesis.

The monograph consists of a cohesive report including a description of the research assignment, issues, working methods, analysis, results and a discussion. For monographs, it is particularly important that the candidate's own research is presented in such a way that the methods used, results achieved and conclusions drawn can be understood and assessed.

The thesis must relate to the learning outcomes of the Higher Education Ordinance, which means the outcomes for both the compilation thesis and the monograph are principally to:

- demonstrate up-to-date specialised knowledge and a broad and advanced understanding of the research field,
- demonstrate the ability to place the thesis into a broader theoretical and scientific context,
- state clear goals of the thesis project and its most important hypotheses and issues,
- demonstrate familiarity with the methods and analytical tools used within the research field, and an ability to assess and evaluate them,
- demonstrate an ability to reflect on the importance and limitations of the candidate's own research,
- make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge in the field and identify the need for further knowledge.



## Outcomes for the degree of Doctor according to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

### Knowledge and understanding

*For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall*

1. demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of the research field as well as advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field, and
2. demonstrate familiarity with research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

### Competence and skills

*For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall*

3. demonstrate the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis as well as to review and assess new and complex phenomena, issues and situations autonomously and critically,
4. demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames and to review and evaluate such work,
5. demonstrate through a dissertation the ability to make a significant contribution to the formation of knowledge through his or her own research,
6. demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings authoritatively in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general,
7. demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge, and
8. demonstrate the capacity to contribute to social development and support the learning of others both through research and education and in some other qualified professional capacity.

### Judgement and approach

*For the Degree of Doctor the third-cycle student shall*

9. demonstrate intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude as well as the ability to make assessments of research ethics, and
10. demonstrate specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used.