

The aims, organising and good practices of doctoral training at the University of Tampere

Adopted by the Rector on 14 December 2015 (Rector's decision D/1461/401.03/2015)

The recommendation contained in this document is issued in order to support doctoral researchers, their supervisors and the University Services. These guidelines support the high scientific level, pedagogy, study administration and quality enhancement of doctoral training. What is said about doctoral training in this document also pertains to training that leads to scientific Licentiate's degrees. This recommendation also applies to the Licentiate and Doctor of Arts (Theatre and Drama) degree and its doctoral research, which contains artistic and/or practical parts.

The Schools issue their own more detailed guidelines and instructions on doctoral training and the dissertation process.

The general stipulations on doctoral training are included in the Universities Act (558/2009) and certain other acts, the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) and the University of Tampere's Regulations on Degrees and Regulations on the Assessment of Studies. The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Ethics and, at the University of Tampere, the Research Council, Teaching Council, University Services and the Library issue guidelines and recommendations on doctoral training.

At the University of Tampere, people working towards their doctorates are called *doctoral researchers* (in Finnish *väitöskirjatutkija*). This job title should be used in the employment contract. A person working towards a Doctor of Arts (Theatre and Drama) degree may be called *väitöstutkija* in Finnish (*doctoral researcher* in English).

1. Aims of doctoral training

Doctoral training implements the University of Tampere's strategic educational and research missions and has social impact. Doctoral training is a means to ensure the continuity and high quality of research and education.

The research, education and supervision offered by the University of Tampere's doctoral programmes are of high quality, distinguished and attract talented and motivated applicants.

The University improves the high quality and impact of doctoral training by supporting the Schools in the systematic recruiting of high-level doctoral researchers from Finland and abroad.

The completion of doctoral degrees is supported by well-designed and implemented admission criteria and procedures. The Schools ensure that their application and admission processes enable the reliable, equal and comprehensive assessment of the applicants and that the admitted doctoral researchers have adequate preconditions for completing their degrees.

The smooth progress of doctoral studies and the completion of the degrees within the target time are also supported by curriculum design, study planning, supervision and funding as well as by including the doctoral researchers in research communities and enabling their participation in instruction.

A full-time doctoral researcher can complete his or her dissertation and the other studies required for the doctoral degree in four years.

2. Organisation and resources

The coordination, assessment and development of doctoral training is undertaken by the University's Doctoral School, which operates under the leadership of the University's Research Council. The Doctoral School reports to the Research Council, which formulates the strategic goals concerning doctoral training.

Study administration and quality assurance matters of the Doctoral School may also be addressed by the Teaching Council as befits the agendas of the two Councils. The university lecturer who works at the Doctoral School prepares and presents matters to the Teaching Council.

The Schools and the Doctoral School prepare the curricula of the doctoral degrees, develop teaching and assessment methods and supervision in cooperation with study services when necessary.

Doctoral training is carried out as doctoral programmes. Schools may have several doctoral programmes, and one doctoral programme can be organised by more than one School. Doctoral programmes are headed by a professor appointed by the dean. The head professors form the monitoring group of doctoral programmes on the University level, whose meetings are convened by the University's Doctoral School.

Schools have doctoral education committees appointed by the dean for the purpose of following up, supervising and developing doctoral training in the School. The committee also makes proposals on doctoral training to be adopted by the Management Board and the dean, and it provides support to supervisors and doctoral researchers.

The dean is in charge of allocating resources to doctoral training and the head professors of doctoral programmes together with the doctoral education committee ensure that the dean has sufficient information on the resources that are needed.

On their homepages, the Schools publish up-to-date study guides for doctoral researchers and supervisors.

Admission to the doctoral programme does not require prior knowledge of a secure financial source or a promise that such a source can be found. When possible, the School will employ the doctoral researcher for the duration of the degree; however, for four years at the most. The School and the supervisors support the doctoral researchers when they acquire funding.

3. Application and admission processes, monitoring progress

When a School decides on the number of doctoral researchers it will admit, it first gathers and makes use of the latest information on the total number of doctoral researchers per supervisor and the number of doctoral researchers who are actively pursuing their degrees. The School ensures that there are sufficient resources for supervision and uses this as one criteria in the admission of new doctoral researchers.

The School describes the procedures used in the application and admission process of doctoral researchers as well as the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved in the process.

The doctoral researcher drafts a research outline and a personal study plan, which are updated as his or her studies and research progress.

The doctoral researcher reports on his or her advancement once a year directly to the doctoral education committee or the follow-up group if there is one in the School.

4. Supervision and problematic situations

The doctoral researcher makes an agreement on supervision, which is in line with the supervisory plan of the doctoral programme.

The doctoral researcher has at least two supervisors or one supervisor and the follow-up group. One of the supervisors must be a professor or an adjunct professor with an employment contract at the School, and the other supervisor must have completed at least a doctoral degree. The supervisors possess the knowledge and skills required in supervision. The University provides opportunities for developing the skills needed in good supervision. The supervisors agree about their division of labour and responsibilities in the supervision agreement they make with the doctoral researcher.

The doctoral researcher is entitled to supervision in both groups and on one-on-one basis. The supervisor must provide the doctoral researcher with an opportunity to participate in reciprocal peer supervision. Apart from the research seminar, special peer supervision and learning methods, such as study circles, tutoring, workshop work and supervision, and internships should be offered.

Supervisors ensure that the doctoral researchers adhere to sound scientific practice. Good supervision also includes support in career planning.

If there is a problem in the supervisory relationship that significantly interferes with the dissertation process, the doctoral researcher or the supervisor or both together have the duty to report the problems to the follow-up group and, if there is no such thing, to the School's doctoral education committee. If the problems in the supervisory relationship hindering the dissertation work cannot be solved, the doctoral education committee may propose a change of supervisors after hearing both the doctoral researcher and the supervisor. The Schools issue further instructions and describe the process of how supervisors can be changed.

If the doctoral researcher is not actively working on the doctoral dissertation or pursuing the other studies included in the degree, the doctoral education committee may put an end to the supervisory relationship after hearing the supervisor and the doctoral researcher (and the possible follow-up group). The doctoral researcher can gain back the status of a supervisee after presenting a realistic work plan. If work on the doctoral dissertation has already previously not proceeded regardless of multiple new work plans, the doctoral researcher has the additional duty to show how his or her work has proceeded since supervision was interrupted.

5. Instruction offered by the Schools and the Doctoral School

The curricula of doctoral programmes are based on learning outcomes. The extent of the doctoral degree programme is 240 credits. The studies include at least 40 credits of studies other than the dissertation.

The Schools organise doctoral studies as detailed in the curricula.

The Schools approve the curriculum of the University's Doctoral School. The Doctoral School organises supplementary instruction on the basics of scientific research, methodological and research skills and transferable skills. The Doctoral School works to secure sufficient knowledge and teaching in sound scientific practice.

Doctoral studies organised by the Doctoral School may be used to compensate studies in the doctoral programme. Further instructions on compensation are included in the curriculum.

The Doctoral School coordinates courses that are open to doctoral researchers at the Schools and support the Schools in providing doctoral training. In addition, the Doctoral School also organises seminars and other events, especially in order to facilitate finding employment.

6. The dissertation, pre-examination, the public defence and approval of the dissertation

What is stated below about the doctoral dissertation also applies to a doctoral dissertation in the field of theatre and drama where applicable. The Rector adopted the University of Tampere's guideline on theses on 16 September 2015 and the guideline is also applied to Licentiate's theses and doctoral dissertations where appropriate, especially as concerns the aims and principles of supervision.

The high scientific quality of dissertations is strategically significant to the University, and quality is the most important aspect in their assessment. The Schools issue detailed instructions on what constitutes a successful dissertation and ensure that the dissertations the doctoral researchers produce adhere to those instructions. The instructions the Schools issue take into consideration the Finnish and the most pertinent international practices in the field.

The pre-examination is the most important phase of quality control in the dissertation process. At least two pre-examiners are appointed for each dissertation. Both of the pre-examiners should be independent from the School in question and in addition at least one pre-examiner independent from the University of Tampere. At least one of the pre-examiners must be docent or have equivalent scientific expertise and the other pre-examiner must hold at least a doctoral degree. Both of the pre-examiners must have adequate knowledge of the subject matter and the methods used in the dissertation. One pre-examiner of a doctoral dissertation in the field of theatre and drama may be an eminent artist even if he or she does not hold a doctoral degree.

The evaluation criteria of a doctoral dissertation are used in the pre-examination. The pre-examination concerns the whole dissertation and the pre-examiner's statement is unconditional: it either gives or denies permission to publicly defend the dissertation. Apart from this, the pre-examiner may recommend corrections and revisions to the manuscript. If the pre-examiners propose granting the permission to defend the dissertation, that decision is not revoked unless there are valid grounds to do so, for example in case misconduct is suspected.

A dissertation manuscript sent to pre-examination is not public and the participants in the pre-examination process cannot refer to it, cite it or use it in any way.

Schools issue instructions on the publication forum and format and on how the dissertation is made available to the public. The University is committed to open access publishing and dissertations are published online unless there are special grounds not to do so. The people involved in the publication process must reserve sufficient time for all the steps in the process.

One or two people who are at least docents and are independent from the University of Tampere are appointed as opponents. In the field of theatre and drama, an eminent artist may act as an opponent even without a doctoral degree. A pre-examiner may act as the opponent only if there are special reasons to do so.

The public defence is chaired by the *custos* who is the official custodian of the event. It is most often the supervisor who acts as the *custos*. The job of the *custos* can be given to a professor at the University of Tampere's or, if so instructed by the School, to a docent or a professor emeritus or



emerita. The custos writes a report on the dissertation defence detailing the events during the public defence and the possible comments the doctoral researcher receives from persons other than the opponent.

An assessment committee is set up for before the dissertation defence. After hearing the custos, the committee makes a proposal on the acceptance of the dissertation to the Management Board of the School. The proposal is based on the pre-examination reports and the opponent's statement. The Management Board makes the decision on the acceptance of the dissertation. The supervisor of the dissertation cannot participate in the decision-making.

If the opponent states that the dissertation should be accepted, the School can dismiss the dissertation only on solid grounds, for example because of a serious breach of sound scientific practice.

The Schools publish detailed instructions on pre-examination, the public defence and the assessment of the dissertation; international pre-examiners and opponents in particular should be taken into account. The School and the custos ensure that the pre-examiners and opponents have understood the instructions and the nature of the dissertation and the purpose of the different steps in the dissertation process.