

# Guidelines for assessing doctoral theses submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, UCPH

These guidelines have been drawn under the authority endowed by the **Ministerial Order on Doctoral Degrees** (ministerial order no. 750 of 14/08/1996, as amended by ministerial order no. 1321 of 05/12/2008), section 1 (2). Combined with the University of **Copenhagen's Internal rules and guidelines for submitting doctoral theses** of 18 December 1996 (IRV) and the Academic Council's memorandum dated 8 January 2010, regarding the **choice of language for doctoral theses, abstracts and assessments**, they constitute the overall instructions for assessing doctoral theses.

## The work of the assessment committee

The assessment committee conducts an academic assessment of the submitted thesis. According to the ministerial order, the criteria used by the committee for its work are that **"the author has considerable academic insight and maturity"** and that she or he **"with the thesis has brought the research field a significant step forward"** (section 3 (2)). The latter is taken to mean that the thesis makes a significant contribution consisting of significant new empirical knowledge, methodological innovation or theoretical insight in its academic field.

## Form of assessment

The assessment must provide a comprehensive summary of the main points of the thesis, and rule on how it addresses the selected problem areas in relation to the current state of research in the subject field concerned.

The assessment should also provide an academic evaluation of the thesis as a whole, including its choice of materials, application of methodology, use of theoretical concepts, and incorporation of relevant research literature. It should result in **"a reasoned written recommendation as to whether the thesis should be accepted or rejected for defence of the doctoral degree"** (section 10 (1)).

The conclusion reached about rejection or acceptance must be clearly stipulated in the assessment, but this should **not** take the form of advice on a rewrite for resubmission.

The assessment must lead naturally to the overall conclusion via a weighting in terms of the content (but not necessarily in terms of the extent) of positive and negative elements.

It is also important that **"the recommendation [...] is written in a suitably objective form"** so that it represents **"a satisfactory basis for reaching a decision"** (section 10 (1)) for the Academic Council, and that it is suitable for publication (IRV 7). The language must therefore be sober and objective.

The assessment should not exceed ten A4 pages (corresponding to approx. 5,000 words).

## The committee's duties concerning responses to consultation

After compliance control, the assessment is sent to the Faculty Secretariat for written consultation with the author, who is given the opportunity to respond in writing (section 11). The assessment committee then has a duty to comment in writing on the author's observations, and to reconsider its position. The committee's response to the author's comments is sent for information to the author before the Academic Council rules on the matter. If the committee's comments include new information on which the author has not previously had an opportunity to comment, the author must be given the opportunity to do so before the Academic Council reaches its decision.

## Withdrawal of a thesis

If the committee (or part of it) recommends that the thesis be rejected, the author has three weeks to either comment or withdraw the thesis from further consideration (section 11 (2)). If the thesis is not withdrawn by the deadline, the author is informed of the date by which the Academic Council will make its decision. If the author submits comments to the assessment, he or she must be made aware that both the author's and the committee's comments in response to them will be submitted to the Academic Council as part of the basis upon which a decision is reached. The author is also made aware that the final opportunity to withdraw the thesis is immediately before the Academic Council rules on the issue. As soon as the Academic Council has processed the assessment committee's recommendation, the thesis can no longer be withdrawn to avoid rejection by the Academic Council.

Regardless of whether the thesis is withdrawn before it is processed by the Academic Council, any subsequent submission will be regarded as a resubmission, which entails a duty to disclose the earlier assessment (section 4 (2), no. 3). For a thesis to be considered non-assessed, the author must withdraw it before the Assessment Committee begins the assessment process (section 9, (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> dot).

Approved by Faculty Board of Humanities

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