



## Procedure for the oral defence of a licentiate thesis at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

1. Examination is carried out by an independent examining committee in conjunction with the public defence of the licentiate thesis for the degree of licentiate. In the light of the degree outcomes, the examining committee present at the thesis defence must assess the thesis and the author's oral defence of it.
2. If a member of the examining committee after receiving the thesis, have severe considerations about the quality of the thesis, he/she must contact the chair no later than one week before the defence. SLU thesis criteria are regulated in the *Guidelines for third-cycle (doctoral) education 2015* see [www.slu.se](http://www.slu.se)
3. No written comments, statements etc. are expected
4. Formal dress is not (or only exceptionally) used. The defence is conducted in the presence of an audience, often consisting of up to 30–40 persons.
5. The audience is of a very mixed background, i.e. it consists both of academic colleagues and family, relatives and friends of the respondent.
6. The proceedings are conducted by a chairperson, who starts by reading the title of the thesis and by declaring that the thesis has been accepted for official defence. The chair also introduces the author of the thesis (the 'respondent') and the examining committee (3 or 5 members, selected by the faculty board).
7. The chair then asks the respondent for a short presentation/summary of the thesis (15–30 minutes). Any comments regarding corrections of the text can be included; these are usually presented on an errata list.
8. The chair then invites the examining committee to a more detailed discussion of the scientific content of the thesis with the respondent. This discussion should preferably not concern minor errors in the text etc., but instead issues such as the respondent's conception of the field studied, the experimental techniques employed, possible pitfalls, potential future developments etc. The members of the examining committee should feel free to select various aspects for discussion entirely at their own discretion. However, all issues raised should be of relevance to the thesis. The members of the examining committee as well as the respondent may use PP presentations of tables or figures during the discussions. This phase of the proceedings, during which the discussants tend to ignore the audience, usually takes 1–2 hours or more. The members of the examining committee should stress the virtues as well as the weaknesses of the work.

9. After completion of the debate, the members of the examining committee end with a few (kind) remarks on a more personal note, usually involving some kind of congratulation; the respondent answers by thanking the members of the examining committee for the examination.
10. The chair then invites anyone in the audience who wishes to raise additional problems or questions. The members of the examining committee may again participate at this point. After this additional discussion, the chair ends the proceedings.
11. Following this, the examining committee has a closed meeting. The respondent's supervisors are also present, and may give a more informal opinion of the thesis. The supervisors usually comment on the role of the respondent in the project, the extent of independent work etc. Additional questions regarding the thesis may be raised. Before the examining committee formally decides on whether or not to approve the thesis and the oral examination, the supervisors must leave the meeting.