



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Council for doctoral education, FUR

16/02/2021

Thesis and the public defence at SLU

Defences of doctoral thesis/licentiate seminars are held between August 15 and June 15.

Here you can find the [SLU template for doctoral thesis](#).

The information presented in this document originates from this web page:

<https://internet.slu.se/en/support-services/education/doctoral-education1/defence-of-doctoral-thesis-or-licentiate-seminar/>

Short information to doctoral students and supervisors regarding public defence:

Please observe that more detailed information on each step is given below in the expandable menus.

1. Approx. 4-6 months before the public defence

Reserve time and date for the defence by contacting an education officer at your faculty office. Contact external reviewer, examining committee and chairperson. Book a room for the defence.

2. 3 months before public defence

Application for public defence, together with declarations of conflict of interest, should be sent to the faculty office at least 3 months before the defence (12 weeks for doctoral students admitted before January 1 2013.) [Here you will find appropriate forms](#). At the LTV-faculty the thesis is also sent to the faculty director of studies for pre-examination.

After the decision about public defence has been made, the faculty office sends out an e-mail with information to the external reviewer, examining committee, chairperson, doctoral student and supervisor. The e-mail contains a copy of the decision, as well as degree outcomes and [information about the procedures during public defence](#).

3. 3 weeks before the public defence

The thesis shall be nailed/"spikad" (announced) at least 3 weeks before the public defence. By giving printed versions of the thesis to the registry office (Registrar) and the library, as well as registration of fulltext in the [SLU publication database SLUpub](#) which makes it fully accessible, the thesis is announced correctly. You will find more information about announcement, number of theses etc below.

4. Day of public defence

NJ- and S-faculties: After the defence, please give a copy of the "Examining committee minutes" to your Ladok-administrator at the department and send the original to your faculty office.

VH- and LTV- faculties: After the defence, please send the "Examining committee minutes" (original) to the officer at your faculty office.

5. Application for a degree is carried out using [Ladok for students](#).

Good luck with your public defence!

Contact the media

Do you want to

- make your thesis available in a popular-science format;
- contact media in connection with your defense;
- present your thesis on the SLU website?

Please contact the [Division of Communication for more information](#).

Thesis format

As part of their PhD studies, students will produce a written thesis, consisting of a synthesis based on three to four papers that should have been accepted by, or at least submitted to, an international scientific journal with a referee system or a monograph. A printed thesis should be available for public scrutiny before the candidate's public defence.

A thesis may be a compilation of papers (articles or manuscripts) or a monograph. The faculty board may exclude the possibility of presenting the thesis as a monograph. If so, this must be evident from the general syllabus for the subject. A thesis must be written in English, or in Swedish if this is relevant for the subject.

Rules on the format and quality requirements of the thesis can be found in the [SLU guidelines for doctoral education](#), please read them thoroughly. Please observe that there are different versions of the guidelines, and the one that apply for you is the one that was active when you were admitted as doctoral student.

Here you will find the [thesis template](#).

Compilation thesis

In addition to the papers included, a compilation thesis must include a summarising chapter, in which the student places his/her work in an international scientific context with the help of a literature review of the subject and a synthesis of the papers included in the thesis. The thesis section must be checked using the Urkund plagiarism checker.

The quality of all papers included in a compilation thesis must be such that they can be published without major reworking in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, or of similarly good quality as recognised within the discipline.

For more information on this, please see the [SLU guidelines for doctoral education](#).

[When discussing the order of authors and authorships for a paper that will be used in a thesis, these guidelines may be used.](#)

Monograph thesis

All doctoral students writing a monograph thesis must hold a final seminar no earlier than nine months before the planned date for defence of the thesis, or the licentiate seminar.

The student must present his/her work, answer questions and discuss comments at the final seminar. An evaluator must participate in the final seminar. Monograph theses must be checked using the Urkund plagiarism checker.

For more information on this, please see the [SLU guidelines for doctoral education](#).

External pre-examination procedure

External pre-examination is only necessary if the principal supervisor decides that the thesis and doctoral student are ready for the licentiate seminar or the defence of the thesis, even though the formal requirements are not met or if the principal supervisor decides that the thesis and doctoral student are ready for the defence of the thesis even though the evaluator at the final seminar strongly questioned the prospects of the thesis being completed according to timetable.

For more information on this, please see the [SLU guidelines for doctoral education](#).

Application for defence of thesis/licentiate seminar

Thesis defence proceedings/licentiate seminars are held between 15 August and 15 June. Exemption from these time limits may be granted by the faculty board.

The faculty board decides the time and place of the thesis defence/licentiate seminar, and appoints a chair, examining committee and external reviewer (for defence only). Applications for defence of a thesis/licentiate seminar must be received by the faculty office no later than three months before the planned date of the defence/ licentiate seminar.

Applications will only be approved if

- the programme meets the scope and content requirements set out in the guidelines;
- the programme meets the requirements set out in the general syllabus;
- examinations have been held for all courses included in the degree and registered in LADOK before the defence/licentiate seminar. The faculty board may grant exemption for a planned or ongoing course.

The application must be accompanied by

- A CV and list of publications for any examining committee member who is not a *docent* or professor at a Swedish higher education institution;
- conflict of interest declarations submitted by all examining committee members (see chapter 8.1 in the guidelines for doctoral education);
- written assessments submitted by evaluators at the final seminar for monograph theses (see chapter 5.5.2 in the guidelines for doctoral education);
- pre-examination report (if any) and a statement by the principal supervisor (see chapter 5.5.3 in the guidelines for doctoral education);
- a declaration of co-authorship.

To write and publish a thesis

- [Thesis template](#)
- [To write and publish your thesis](#)
- [Alnarp Repro](#)
- [Uppsala Repro](#)

External pre-examination procedure

External pre-examination is only necessary if the principal supervisor decides that the thesis and doctoral student are ready for the licentiate seminar or the defence of the thesis, even though the formal requirements are not met or if the principal supervisor decides that the thesis and doctoral student are ready for the defence of the thesis even though the evaluator at the final seminar strongly questioned the prospects of the thesis being completed according to timetable.

Announcement (Spikning)

When the faculty board has approved an application for a public defence or licentiate seminar, the faculty office must announce the defence or seminar in an appropriate manner.

Notification of the defence of a thesis (spikning)

Doctoral and licentiate theses are announced by way of registration with the senior register clerk no later than three weeks before the defence or licentiate seminar. When registered, the thesis must be published in the SLUpub database at the SLU Library. Registration takes place between 15 August and 1 July. The faculty board may decide on exemptions from these time limits.

Checklist - before the day of public display of the thesis ("spikning")

- The thesis should be **printed 3 weeks before the dissertation** at the latest, (the day of public display of the thesis).
- Your thesis should also **be published electronically in SLUpub 3 weeks before the dissertation (on the day of public display)**.
- NJ- faculty: **On the day of public display** it is your responsibility that **3 copies** of the thesis are available at the SLU library in Uppsala and **1 copy** at the Registrar office, Box 7070, 750 07 Uppsala.
- VH-faculty: **On the day of public display** it is your responsibility that **4 copies** of the thesis are available at the SLU library in Uppsala and **1 copy** at the Registrar office, Box 7070, 750 07 Uppsala.
- S-faculty: **On the day of public display** it is your responsibility that **4 copies** of the thesis are available at the library at the campus where the dissertation takes place and **1 copy** of the thesis at the Registrar office, SLU, 901 83 Umeå.
- **LTV faculty**: Repro Alnarp will handle the sending out of theses for doctoral students at the LTV faculty.

Chair, external reviewer and examining committee

Applications for public defence of a doctoral thesis

The application for public defence of a thesis proposes a chair, external reviewer (opponent) and examining committee composed of three or five members to the faculty board, which decides the matter. If the examining committee has three members, a reserve member must be appointed. The persons proposed must have accepted the engagement and signed a conflict of interest declaration before they are proposed to the faculty board. The principal supervisor and assistant supervisor may not be members or chair of the examining committee. Both sexes must be represented as full members of the examining committee. The faculty board may grant exemption if there are particular reasons for doing so.

The external reviewer must have a PhD and the chair must be employed at SLU. Examining committee members must have PhDs, and the majority of them must have been admitted as *docent* or possess scientific competence considered by the faculty board to be equivalent to that required to be admitted

as a *docent* in the relevant subject. The examining committee present at the defence of the thesis must have at least one member who does not work at SLU and who is employed at a university other than SLU. A member may be employed at the same faculty but not in the same department as the doctoral student. A reserve member is appointed if the examining committee is to be composed of three members, and may be employed at the same department as the student.

Applications for a licentiate seminar

The application for a licentiate seminar proposes a chair and examining committee composed of three members and a reserve member. The persons proposed must have accepted the engagement and signed a conflict of interest declaration before they are proposed to the faculty board, which decides the matter. The principal supervisor and assistant supervisor may not be members or chair of the examining committee. Both sexes must be represented as full members of the examining committee. The faculty board may grant exemption if there are particular reasons for doing so.

The chair of the licentiate seminar must be employed at SLU. Examining committee members must have PhDs, and at least one of them must be employed at a faculty other than the student. One member may be employed in the same department as the student.

Declaring conflicts of interest

There must be no conflicts of interest between members of the examining committee and the doctoral student or supervisor. The following circumstances must particularly be taken into account in relation to the examining committee:

A conflict of interest exists if:

- during the previous five years two persons have collaborated scientifically or have co-produced scientific knowledge. Joint publication is an example of co-production. Reasons can be given for excluding a conflict of interest, for example where collaboration occurred within a scientific consortium in which joint publication does not necessarily imply a conflict of interest;
- in cases of close collaboration, there may be a conflict of interest even if the collaboration took place longer than five years ago;
- a supervisor-student relationship has existed, regardless of how long ago.

The opponent and examining committee members are under a duty to report a conflict of interest in relation to a doctoral student or supervisor. When a member accepts the engagement, a signed conflict of interest declaration must be submitted on the [form provided for the purpose](#).

Defence of doctoral thesis

In the light of the degree outcomes, the examining committee present at the thesis defence must assess the thesis and the author of the thesis oral defence of the thesis. The external reviewer must facilitate the examining committee's assessment by engaging in discussion with the author of the thesis. Hence, the thesis defence must be organised so there is time for

- the author to present his/her thesis;
- the external reviewer to present the subject of the thesis, place the findings of the thesis in a wider context within the subject area, and question and thoroughly discuss the thesis with the author;
- the examining committee to discuss with the author;
- an open discussion in which the public are invited to participate.

The examining committee must meet immediately after the public defence of the thesis. The committee must appoint one of its members chair of the meeting. The chair keeps the thesis file; the external reviewer and supervisor may attend the meeting of the examining committee, but must leave the meeting when the degree decision is to be taken. The grades possible are pass or fail. The decision is minuted using a [common university form](#) provided for the purpose.

The chair must answer questions put by members and the external reviewer as to how the thesis defence is carried out, and is responsible for ensuring that the defence is conducted so the examining committee has the best possible opportunity to perform its duties, and the author of the thesis has the best possible opportunity to show that he/she has achieved the degree outcomes.

Licentiate seminar

In the light of the degree outcomes, the examining committee present at the licentiate seminar must assess the thesis and the author's oral defence of the thesis. Hence, the seminar must be organised so there is time for

- the author to present his/her thesis;
- the examining committee to question and thoroughly discuss it with the author;
- an open discussion in which the public are invited to participate.

The examining committee must meet immediately after the public seminar. The committee must appoint one of its members chair of the meeting. The chair of the licentiate seminar and the supervisor may attend the meeting of the examining committee, but must leave the meeting when the degree decision is to be taken. The grades possible are pass or fail. The decision is minuted using a common university form for the purpose.

The chair must answer questions put by members as to how the licentiate seminar is carried out, and is responsible for ensuring that the seminar is conducted so the examining committee has the best possible opportunity to perform its duties, and the student has the best possible opportunity to show that he/she has achieved the degree outcomes.

Guidance for urgent problems in connection with the public defence of a thesis

Changes prior to the date of the defence concerning the examining committee, the external reviewer or the time of the defence

Decisions regarding changes prior to the date of the defence concerning the examining committee, the external reviewer or the time of the defence are made in the first instance by the chair of the doctoral education committee or the chair of the faculty board. The principal supervisor for the author of the thesis is responsible for ensuring that these changes are observed.

The chair for the public defence, who is appointed by the faculty board, is responsible for dealing with any urgent problems on the day of the public defence.

All decisions regarding changes to how the public defence is to be conducted must comply with the provisions in chapter 8 of the guidelines for doctoral education.

If a member of the examining committee is absent or leaves the public defence/the meeting before a decision has been reached

The examining committee is only quorate when all of its members are present. If a member is absent for an urgent reason from an examining committee comprising three members, the reserve appointed by the faculty board steps in, provided this person has been present at the public defence. For an examining committee with five members, one of the members steps down, so that the total number of members present is three. If a member of an examining committee leaves the public defence or a meeting of the examining committee, the chair for the public defence must inform the members that the examining committee is not quorate if a member is absent.

If, during a public defence and as a result of an urgent situation, the examining committee only comprises two members, the chair of the doctoral education committee in the first instance, and the chair for the public defence in the second instance, may appoint a replacement. Provided that all the conditions prescribed in the university's guidelines for doctoral education are met, the external reviewer may also be appointed as a member of the examining committee.

If the external reviewer is absent

If the external reviewer sends his/her apologies prior to the date of the public defence, a new external reviewer must be appointed by the faculty board, following proposals from the principal supervisor.

If the external reviewer is absent for an urgent reason on the day of the public defence, the chair for the public defence examines whether it will be possible to conduct the public defence later the same day when the external reviewer has arrived. The chair for the public defence determines a later time the same day, in consultation with the author of the thesis, the principal supervisor and the examining committee. The new time must be posted on the door of the venue where the public defence is to take place, and the doctoral education administrator at the faculty office must be informed. If the public defence is delayed by more than 2 hours, the decision to postpone the public defence must be attached to the examining committee's minutes.

If the external reviewer is unable to be present later the same day, the chair for the public defence examines whether it will be possible to conduct the public defence with a newly-appointed external reviewer. Together with the principal supervisor, the chair for the public defence examines whether or not one of the members of the examining committee is willing and able to serve as external reviewer, and what the consequences of this change will be on the composition of the examining committee. If this is possible, a decision is made about a new external reviewer by the chair of the doctoral education committee in the first instance, and the chair for the public defence in the second instance. The author of the thesis must be informed of the decision as soon as possible. Decisions concerning a new external reviewer must be attached to the examining committee's minutes, and must explain the background to the decision and specify who made the decision.

If it is not possible to appoint a new external reviewer, the public defence is postponed until another day. This decision is made in the first instance by the chair of the doctoral education committee, and in the second instance by the chair for the public defence. The decision must describe the reason for the decision and specify who made the decision. The author of the thesis and the doctoral education administrator at the faculty office must be informed as soon as possible, and the decision must be posted on the door of the venue where the public defence was to take place. The decision must be sent in writing to the doctoral education administrator at the faculty office for recording purposes.

In the event of dissenting opinions among the examining committee

The grade voted for by the majority of the examining committee shall apply. A member is entitled to register a dissenting opinion in the examining committee's minutes. If a majority of the examining committee votes to fail the author of the thesis, this must always be justified.

If a member of the examining committee announces that he/she has concerns about the quality of the thesis prior to the public defence

If a member of the examining committee announces that he/she has concerns about the quality of the thesis prior to the public defence, the principal supervisor must discuss the matter with the author of the thesis in order to arrive at a solution, e.g. that the public defence be postponed until the problem has been resolved.

Contact

LTV-faculty: Lotta Malmberg forskarutbildning-ltv@slu.se

NJ-faculty: [Eva Andersson-Björkman](#) or [Johanna Nilsson](#) or visit the [NJ-faculty contact page](#)

S-faculty: [Eva Andersson](#) or [Charlotta Bergström](#)

VH-faculty: [Fredrik Granberg](#) (fun-vh@slu.se)

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