RULES OF PROCEDURE

for

the PhD Committee at Natural Sciences

Drafted within the framework of the standard rules of procedure for PhD committees as laid down by the rector, see section 32(5) of the Aarhus University by-laws.

Membership, constitution etc.

Section 1.-(1) The PhD committee consists of 11 members elected by and among the academic staff (4 members) and the PhD students (7 members).

Subsection (2) When determining the number of members and, where relevant, division into areas of representation, the academic scope of the graduate school is taken into account.

Subsection (3) The PhD committee can invite non-members to participate, to specified extent, as observers at PhD committee meetings. Observers have a right to speak, but do no have voting rights.

Section 2.-(1) The PhD committee's academic staff representatives are elected to three-year terms. The PhD committee's PhD student representatives are elected to one-year terms.

Subsection (2) The PhD committee holds its constitutive meeting no later than one week before newly elected members join the committee. The outgoing chair calls the meeting. At the meeting, the outgoing chair briefs the committee on the work of the committee and the committee schedules future meetings.

Subsection (3) At the constitutive meeting, the PhD committee recommends a chair and a vice-chair (where relevant) to the dean. The chair and the vice-chair (where relevant) are appointed by the dean to one-year terms.

Tasks

Section 3.-(1) The tasks of the PhD committee are:
1) Recommending a chair from among the PhD committee's academic staff members and (where relevant) a vice-chair from among the PhD committee's PhD students. Recommendations must be submitted to the dean, who will make a decision by authority of the rector.
2) Making recommendations to the rector regarding the composition of assessment committees.
3) Approving PhD courses.
4) Drawing up proposals for internal guidelines for the graduate school, including PhD supervision, to the head of the graduate school.

5) Making statements on the evaluation of PhD programmes and supervision, including international evaluations of graduate schools, to the head of the graduate school.
6) Approving applications for credit transfer, including advance approval of transfer credit, and for dispensations.
7) Making statements about all matters of importance for the PhD programme and PhD supervision put before the committee by the rector.
8) Other tasks as specified in the university's by-laws.

Committees

Section 4.-(1) The PhD committee can appoint advisory committees, but these committees may not be assigned any independent powers.

Ordinary and extraordinary meetings, documentation in writing

Section 5.-(1) The committee conducts its business at meetings, cf. however section 7. Ordinary meetings are held at the university, although not during the period 1 July-15 August.

Subsection (2) The chair sends out an agenda or a notice cancelling the meeting to the members no later than four working days prior to each ordinary meeting. If there is a vice-chair, the vice-chair helps to organise the work of the PhD committee, including draft agendas. At the same time, the agenda or the cancellation must be published on the university's website or in another suitable manner. A supplementary agenda setting out additional items to be considered may be sent out no later than two days before the meeting.

Subsection (3) If, no later than one week prior to an ordinary meeting, a member requests that a matter be considered, the chair must include the matter as an item on the agenda for the meeting in question.

Subsection (4) The chair ensures that the information required to consider the matters at hand is provided to the members. If this information is not sent to the members along with the agenda for an ordinary meeting, members must be informed in connection with the distribution of the agenda of when they can expect the material to be distributed or handed out to them.

Section 6.-(1) Ekstraordinary meetings must be held as and when deemed necessary by the chair. Extraordinary meetings must also be held if so requested by one-third of the members of the PhD committee. The meeting must be held no later than one week after such a request.

Subsection (2) Invitations to extraordinary meetings must be sent at least 24 hours in advance. The items on the agenda must be stated in the invitation, along with the information members need to consider the matters at hand.

Section 7.-(1) If all members agree, routine matters for decision may be considered in writing without holding a meeting. A proposal for decision with the information required for the consideration of the matter for decision is distributed as a basis for consideration. The members must indicate whether they can accept the procedure for the consideration of the matter and if so, whether they agree with the proposed decision. In the event that a member is unable to accept the consideration of the matter in writing, the matter must be included as an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the PhD committee.

Public access to meetings

Section 8.-(1) PhD committee meetings are public. The PhD committee may decide, however, that selected items on the agenda are to be considered behind closed doors if this is deemed necessary due to the nature of the matters for consideration or circumstances in general.

Subsection (2) If the PhD committee finds that its deliberations are being disrupted, it may exclude one or more members of the audience from the meeting in question. If necessary, the rest of the meeting can be held behind closed doors.

Subsection (3) Meetings must be held behind closed doors during consideration of matters involving information that must be kept confidential to safeguard public or private interests. This means that these and other matters must be considered behind closed doors:

1) Composition of assessment committees.
2) Applications for credit transfer and exemptions for named individuals.
3) Cases submitted to the committee for comment or by way of information concerning the personal or financial situation of specific individuals.

Subsection (4) Any uncertainty as to whether a matter warrants deliberation behind closed doors must be settled behind closed doors if deemed necessary by the chair or a majority of the members.

Subsection (5) The PhD committee can grant permission for observers to be present during the consideration of matters behind closed doors.

Subsection (6) Members and observers must observe confidentiality in connection with matters considered behind closed doors in accordance with subsection (3).

Quorum, chairing meetings and consideration of cases

Section 9.-(1) A quorum exists when at least half of the PhD committee's members are present.

Subsection (2) PhD committee meetings are chaired by the chair. The chair decides all questions regarding how meetings are chaired.

Subsection (3) Matters on the agenda are considered at meetings in the order in which they ar elisted on the agenda.

Subsection (4) The PhD committtee can decide to include new items on the agenda, and it may decide to deviate from the original order set out in the agenda and consider matters in a different order.

Subsection (5) Decisions on matters which were not included as individual items on the agenda distributed prior to an ordinary meeting may only be made in the event that none of the members present at the meeting object to this.

Subsection (6) Decisions on matters which were not included as individual items on the agenda distributed prior to an extraordinary meeting can only be made in the event that all members are present and none of the members object to this.

Section 10.-(1) The PhD committee's decisions are carried by a simple majority of votes.

Compulsory attendance, competence to act and summoning alternates

Section 11.-(1) The members have a duty to attend committee meetings.

Subsection (2) Members who are unable to attend a meeting must notify the chair thereof before the meeting. The resolution minutes taken for each meeting must state which members were absent.

Subsection (3) Members may only vote at PhD committee meetings if they are present in person, cf. however section 7.

Section 12.-(1) A member must notify the chair of any circumstances which may give rise to doubts about the member's competence to act. Such notification must as far as possible be provided before the meeting.

Subsection (2) In case of doubt, the PhD committee decides whether the member can participate in the consideration of the matter in question. In the event that the member cannot participate in the consideration of the matter and an alternate has been elected for the member, the chair calls in the substitute to participate in the consideration of the matter.

Section 13.-(1) In the event that a member is absent due to illness, a study trip etc. for a period of more than two months and is therefore unable to participate in the work of the PhD committee, the chair calls in the alternate to take the member's place on the committee during the period of absence. The chair decides whether the conditions for calling in the alternate are met. The election secretariat must be informed of decisions regarding the calling in of alternates.

Subsection (2) In the event that a member is no longer eligible, the member must resign from the PhD committee. In the event of a leave of absence, the rector (through the election secretariat) can, on the recommendation of the council, decide that the member's resignation only applies during the period of leave.

Section14.-(1) In the event of a vacancy on the PhD committee and where a sufficient number of alternates have not been elected or appointed to ensure that the PhD committee has the required number of members, the PhD committee submits a recommendation to the rector (through the election secretariat) on whether the vacant seats should be filled through by-elections or whether the seats should remain vacant until the next ordinary elections.

Resolution minutes and execution of the PhD committee's decisions

Section 15.-(1) The PhD committee's decisions are recorded in resolution minutes, to be distributed no later than fourteen days after the meeting, as far as possible. The minutes are approved either when they are distributed or are submitted for approval at the next meeting. All members are entitled to have a minority viewpoint recorded in the minutes.

Subsection (2) The chair executes the PhD committee's decisions.

Subsection (3) Approved minutes from the meetings of the PhD committee are published on the university's website provided such decisions are not subject to confidentiality. The minutes are sent to the dean, the head of the graduate school, and relevant heads of department and directors of studies.

Subsection (4) The chair of the PhD committee is responsible for ensuring that the PhD committee actively reports on its work.

Section 16.-(1) Any questions concerning the interpretation of the rules of procedure are settled by the PhD committee.

Subsection (2) However, any questions regarding the interpretation of the standard rules of procedure or regarding the compliance of the rules of procedure with the standard rules of procedure must be submitted to the rector.

Amendments to the rules of procedure and the standard rules of procedure

Section 17.-(1) These rules of procedure come into force on 1 March 2013. The PhD committee can amend the rules of procedure by a simple majority of votes, where such proposed amendment has been submitted no later than fourteen days prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered.

Subsection (2) Any amendments to the standard rule of procedure for the PhD committee laid down by the rector also apply to these rules of procedure.

Subsection (3) In exceptional cases and within the framework of the by-laws, the rector can grant an exemption from the provisions of these rules of procedure.