

RULES OF PROCEDURE  
for  
the PhD committee at Natural Sciences

*In the event of any inconsistency between the Danish and English language versions of the document, the Danish version prevails*

Prepared within the framework of the Standard Rules of Procedure for PhD Committees as laid down by the rector, see Article 32(5) of the Aarhus University by-laws.

**Membership, constitution of the committee etc.**

1. The PhD committee consists of a total of 12 members, elected by and from among the academic staff (4 members) and PhD students (8 members) of the main academic area in question.

(2) When determining the number of members and any divisions into areas of representation, the subject scope of the graduate school is taken into account.

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

2. Representatives of the academic staff on the PhD committee are elected for a period of three years. Representatives of the PhD students on the PhD committee are elected for a period of one year.

(2) No later than one week before newly elected members join the committee, the PhD committee holds its first meeting. The retiring chairperson convenes this meeting. At this meeting the retiring chairperson briefs the PhD committee on the committee's work, and the committee schedules its future meetings.

(3) At the first meeting the PhD committee recommends a chairperson and perhaps a deputy chairperson to the dean. The chairperson and any deputy chairperson are appointed by the dean for a period of one year.

**Tasks**

3. The PhD committee has the following tasks:

- 1) Recommending a chairperson from among the academic staff on the PhD committee and perhaps a deputy chairperson from among the students on the PhD committee. Recommendations must be submitted to the dean, who will make a decision based on the 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 guidelines, for the head of the graduate school.
- 5) Making statements on the evaluation of PhD programmes and supervision, including international evaluations of graduate schools, for the head of the graduate school.
- 6) Approving applications for credits, including advance credits, and for exemptions.
- 7) Making statements about all issues of importance for the PhD programme and PhD supervision which the rector presents.
- 8) Other tasks pursuant to the university's by-laws.

**Committees**

4. The PhD committee may appoint advisory committees, but these committees may not be assigned any independent powers.

### **Ordinary and extraordinary meetings, written consideration**

5. The committee performs its activities at meetings, see, however, Article 7. Ordinary meetings are held at the university, although not during the period 1 July-15 August.

(2) The chairperson distributes 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 deputy chairperson, he/she helps to organise the work of the PhD committee, including presenting proposals for the agenda. 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 distributed no later than two days before the meeting.

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

(4) The chairperson must ensure that the information required to assess cases is presented to the members. If this information is not sent to the members along with the agenda for an ordinary meeting, members must be told when the material can be expected to be distributed or handed out to them.

6. Extraordinary meetings must be held as and when deemed necessary by the chairperson. Extraordinary meetings must also be held if so requested by one-third of the members of the PhD committee. The meeting must be held within one week of the request being made.

(2) Extraordinary meetings must be convened subject to a notice of no less than 24 hours. The notice must specify the items on the agenda and must contain the information required to assess the cases in question.

7. If all the members agree, routine issues may be decided without holding a meeting through written consideration. A proposal for a decision along with the information required to assess the case must be distributed and must form the basis for the consideration. The members must indicate whether they can accept the procedure for the consideration, and if so whether they can approve the decision proposed for the case. If any member cannot accept that the case should be determined through written consideration, the case will be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the PhD committee.

### **Public access to meetings**

8. PhD committee meetings are public. The PhD committee may decide, however, that meetings will be held behind closed doors during the consideration of individual items on the agenda if deemed necessary due to the nature of the case or if otherwise required by the circumstances.

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

(3) Meetings must be held behind closed doors when considering cases involving information that must be kept confidential to safeguard public and private interests. Here are some of the cases that must be considered behind closed doors:

1) Composition of assessment committees.

2) Applications for credits 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.

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

(5) The PhD committee may grant permission for observers to be present during the consideration of cases conducted behind closed doors.

(6) Members and observers must observe confidentiality in cases considered behind closed doors in accordance with Article 8(3).

### **Quorum, the chair and consideration of cases**

9. The PhD committee forms a quorum when at least half the prescribed number of members are present.
- (2) The chairperson presides over PhD committee meetings. The chairperson decides in all matters relating to the conducting of the meetings.
- (3) Cases are considered at meetings in the order in which they are listed on the agenda.
- (4) The PhD committee may 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 cases in another order.
- (5) Decisions in cases which were not included as individual items on the agenda distributed prior to an ordinary meeting may be made only when none of the members present at the meeting object to this.
- (6) Decisions in cases which were not included as individual items on the agenda distributed prior to an extraordinary meeting may be made only when all the members are present and none of the members object to this..
10. The PhD committee's decisions are carried by a simple majority of votes.

### **Compulsory attendance, competence to act and calling in substitutes**

11. The members have a duty to attend committee meetings.
- (2) Members who are unable to attend a meeting must notify the chairperson of this fact before the meeting in question. The resolution minutes for each meeting must state which members were absent.
- (3) Members may only vote at PhD committee meetings if they are present in person, see, however, Article 7.
12. Members must notify the chairperson of any circumstances which may give rise to doubts about the member's competence to act. As far as possible, such notification must be given before the meeting in question.
- (2) In cases of doubt, the PhD committee determines whether the member may participate in the consideration of the case in question. If the member cannot participate in the consideration of the case in question and a substitute has been elected for the member, the chairperson calls in the substitute to participate in the consideration.
13. If a member is absent due to illness, study trips etc. for a period of at least two months and is therefore unable to participate in the PhD committee's work, the chairperson calls in the substitute to take the member's place on the committee during the period of absence. The chairperson decides whether the conditions for calling in the substitute have been satisfied. Decisions regarding the calling in of substitutes must be reported to the election secretariat.
- (2) Any members who are no longer eligible must resign from the PhD committee. If a member takes leave of absence, the rector (via the election secretariat) may decide - on the recommendation of the PhD committee - that the said member should only withdraw during the leave of absence.
14. In the event of vacancies on the PhD committee and if a sufficient number of substitutes have not been elected or appointed to ensure that the PhD committee is made up of the required number of members, the PhD committee submits a recommendation to the rector (via the election secretariat) indicating whether the vacant seat(s) should be filled by supplementary election or whether the seat(s) should remain vacant until the next ordinary election.

### **Resolution minutes and execution of the PhD committee's decisions**

15. The PhD committee's resolutions are recorded in resolution minutes, which are to be distributed no later than fourteen days after meetings if possible. The minutes are approved either when they are distributed or when they are submitted for approval at the next meeting. All members are entitled to have a minority viewpoint recorded in the minutes.
- (2) The chairperson executes the PhD committee's decisions.
- (3) Approved minutes of PhD committee meetings are published on the university's website to the extent that 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 course managers.

(4) The chairperson of the PhD committee is responsible for ensuring that the PhD committee actively communicates information about its work.

**16.** Any questions concerning the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure are settled by the PhD committee.

(2) However, any questions concerning the interpretation of the Standard Rules of Procedure or concerning 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**

**17.** These Rules of Procedure enter into force on 1 May 2013. Any decisions to amend these Rules of Procedure may be carried by a simple majority of votes in the PhD committee providing that proposed amendments have been distributed at least fourteen days prior to the meetings at which they are to be considered.

(2) Any amendments to the Standard Rules of Procedure for the PhD committee laid down by the rector also amend these Rules of Procedure.

(3) In exceptional cases and within the framework of Aarhus University's by-laws, the rector may grant exemptions from the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.