



Guidelines and additional provisions to PhD programmes at VID Specialized University

Approved by the Rector 20.09.2016, assessed by the Research Committee and revised by the Vice-Rector for Research: 10.10.2018, 12.11.2019, 03.05.2020, RC 02.09.2020, 12.06.2023, 24.09.2024, 15.10.2024

PART 1. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS (§§1-4)

These guidelines are additional provisions to the Regulation of 11 December 2015 no. 1666 concerning the PhD Degree at VID Specialized University. The guidelines are determined by the Rector pursuant to § 25 of 20 September 2016.

For other provisions that regulate conditions related to the PhD Degree, see the Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges (2005), the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQR, 2011), the Regulations for degrees and protected titles (2005), The Regulations concerning terms and conditions of employment for post-doctoral research fellow, research fellow and research assistant (2006) and resident (2010), the NQR-regulations for standards and criteria for accreditation and quality development in the college- and university sector and the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005).

1) The responsibility for the PhD Programmes

- a) The Board of the Institution is ultimately responsible for the PhD Programmes.
- b) The Research Committee (RC) at VID is the advisory and executive body for the Rector concerning research, research education, research development, dissemination and innovation at strategic level. The RC is subject to its own regulations. The RC is responsible for the regulations, the guidelines and has the authority to suggest additional provisions.
- c) The Doctoral Committees (DC) at VID is the advisory and executive body for the Rector concerning each PhD programme and has the authority to make decisions relating to admissions, progression and completion of each PhD programme. Each DC are subject to its own regulations.

2. Quality assurance

The PhD Programme is governed by the institution's quality system. The following evaluations of the quality of the study are carried out on a regular basis:

- Periodic evaluation of each study programme (every 6th year)
- Evaluation, and offer of an evaluation conversation, following the accomplishment of the PhD programme, (after the student has defended their thesis)
- Evaluation of PhD courses (every 3rd year. For new or revised courses, the course should be evaluated after the course)
- Progress reports (annually)
- Survey about teaching and working environment (every 2nd year)

- PhD survey (every 4th year)

The descriptions of VID's PhD Programmes and the academic content of these must be approved firstly by the relevant DC in relation to academic content, before being formally approved by the Education Committee.

PART 2. ADMISSION, CONTRACT and TERMINATION BEFORE AGREED TIME (§§5-6)

1. Admission

Admission is reviewed in § 5 of the University's Regulation for the PhD Degree at VID. The following additional provisions apply:

- An appointment to a doctoral research fellowship position presupposes that the applicant is qualified for admission to the relevant PhD Programme. The formal offer of employment is therefore to be considered as a formal offer of admission to the relevant PhD programme. An appointment to a research fellow position must be approved by the Appointment Committee.
- The DC approve admissions of externally financed PhD students and VID research fellows who are appointed without an expert assessment of a complete project outline.
- The DC assesses all applications based on academic qualifications. The assistance of either internal or external colleagues may be used.
- At the point of admission, it must be documented that the minimum time allocation and project funding requirements are met, cf. Admission Agreement to the organized PhD Programme at VID.
- Admission applications are assessed according to the criteria specified in § 5 of the regulation, guidelines applied by The Research Council of Norway, and any additional provisions specified in the respective PhD Programmes.
- VID normally requires that applicants must have completed a Masters degree (120 ECTS) and obtained a minimum average grade that equals 4.0 GPA or «B» on the Norwegian grade point scale. VID's admission committee will pay special emphasis to the scientific quality of the Master thesis. Applicants with a lower GPA and/or less ECTS, may be admitted to the PhD programme if it can evidence that they are otherwise qualified to meet the requirements of the programme.
- Appointment of academic supervisor(s): The appointment of supervisors, normally one main supervisor and once co-supervisor, is made by the DC based on the Centre Director's academic assessment. Any adjustments to the supervisory team are also decided by the DC. The contribution of each supervisor and their expected scope are formalised in the Supervisor Agreement.
- Within three (3) months after admission to the PhD programme, a revised project plan (cf §5 -1) must be sent to the Centre Director for archiving. The project plan must be revised in conjunction with the supervisor(s) and with particular focus on:
 - Scientific quality
 - Feasibility
 - Research Ethical considerations

In addition to a revised project plan, the submission must also include:

- Educational plan including trips abroad.
- Approval/recommendations for REK, Sikt or other relevant committees. If approval is not yet given, or not required, this must be accounted for.

- Written recommendations from the main supervisor.

VID funds normally only one doctoral research fellowship per candidate and only if the candidate does not already have a doctoral degree/PhD.

2. Agreements

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree, reviews the Admission Requirements in § 6. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) Funding must be guaranteed for admission to be granted. Applicants who are not fully funded by scholarships, must document that they will be able to spend at least 50 % of their working hours during the PhD Programme on research education and that this time is fully funded, for example by the applicant's regular employer. Applicants who cannot meet this requirement must state the specific reasons for this.
- b) PhD students who are employed by VID, will receive funds for the agreed scholarship period (currently NOK 90 0000). This amount must cover travel expenses, literature, courses, conferences and other academic costs. This amount excludes infrastructure such as office, computer and software. There are separate guidelines for use of these funds.
- c) PhD students with funding from other employers or PhD students without such funding, are expected to guarantee a minimum level of financing (currently NOK 20 000 x 3 years of full-time studies, cf. the admission agreement).
- d) The PhD students' working conditions are regulated by «[The Regulations concerning terms and conditions of employment for post-doctoral research fellow, research fellow, research assistant and resident](#)» pursuant to LOV-2005-04-01-15-§ 6-4. The following additional provisions apply for PhD students at VID:
 - The PhD Programme should normally be completed within a period of three years of full-time research education. The PhD Programme can also be completed in four years with 75 % of the time spent on the PhD Programme and 25 % on work tasks supporting career progression, or other time distribution agreed upon at admission. A minimum requirement is that the PhD Student commits at least 50% of his/her time to the PhD Programme.
 - The type of tasks must be relevant for the career progression of the PhD student's research work and should, as far as possible, help develop competencies for a future career within the academia, communities or commerce. Examples of relevant required tasks are:
 - i. Contribute to teaching and skills training, academic supervision and examination work.
 - ii. Contribute to the collection and preparation of teaching material.
 - iii. Assist other researchers or research groups in various types of research.
 - iv. Participation in other qualifying Faculty/Centre activities, such as research dissemination and/or reporting.
 - v. Participation in committees across faculties/centres
 - vi. Academic and/or administrative support in connection with workshops and conferences

- The employees are governed by current laws and agreements regarding working hours, annual leave and sick leave.
- In the event of documented sick leave (doctor's certificate or self-certification) in excess of two consecutive weeks, the PhD student may apply for an extension of his/her appointment. The application must be submitted to the Centre no later than two months before the expiration of the appointment and within VID's application processing deadline. The Centre Director is responsible for submitting the case to HR as an administrative process.
- Time spent on union representation work is normally compensated with two additional weeks, either as work tasks related to career progression or as an extension of the appointment, in accordance with current guidelines. The Centre Director is responsible for submitting the case to HR as an administrative process after completion of the union representative period.

3. Extended time in the PhD Programme beyond the prescribed period of study

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree, reviews the term of agreement in § 5.4. The following additional provisions apply:

- a. A PhD student may remain admitted to the PhD Programme for up to four (4) years after the prescribed period of study. The prescribed period of study is three years for full time research education. Statutory leave or disruptions due to documented illness are excluded from the time calculation.
- b. Extensions of the PhD Programme may be granted for one (1) year at a time based on an application to the relevant Doctoral Committee. The application must include a progress plan and must be recommended by the PhD student's main supervisor. The Doctoral Committee may reject an extension application if the committee finds that the progression plan and/or completion plan is inadequate. Multiple applications for extensions may be submitted within the maximum time limit on the programme (ref. 3a) and §5.4).
- c. If the PhD student fails to complete within the prescribed period, he/she may apply for up to 40 hours of additional academic supervision. The application must include a progress plan and be recommended by the PhD student's main supervisor. The application must be submitted at the latest on the last day of the prescribed period of study and can only be submitted once. The application should be submitted to the Centre Director for consideration by the relevant Doctoral Committee
- d. A PhD student who has been admitted to the programme for the duration of the prescribed period of study and has successfully completed his/her studies, but who has, for whatever reason, left the programme, may, at any given time, submit his/her thesis for assessment.

PART 3. IMPLEMENTATION (§§7-11)

1. Academic supervision

The University's regulation for the PhD Degree, reviews academic supervision of the thesis work in § 7. The following additional provisions apply:

- i) PhD students are entitled to academic supervision during their thesis work, and they are expected to actively make use of this entitlement. Please refer to the admission agreement to the organized PhD Programme at VID.
- j) The academic supervisor is responsible for monitoring the PhD student's academic development. The candidate has the right to receive feedback on submitted text within reasonable time. The following guidelines apply:
 - i) One week response time for drafts for chapters/articles (maximum 30 pages).
 - ii) Three weeks response time for reading through a full monograph. The candidate can only expect the supervisor to read through the entire thesis once.
 - iii) Two weeks response time for full extended introduction (kappe). • If the supervisor cannot meet the required response time (due to holiday, illness or other relevant workload-related reasons), the candidate must be notified immediately and be given information about the new response time.
 - iv) It is expected that the candidate contributes to the supervisory relationship by keeping to agreed deadlines for submitting work for review and/or notifying the supervisor in a timely manner about plans to submit text material.
- k) A fixed amount of time is assigned for academic supervision (currently 210 hours). This time is shared between the supervisors as stipulated in the supervisor agreement for each project. The time allocation include preparation, conversations with the students and any supplementary work.
- l) Normally, at least one of the supervisors must have VID as their main employer.
- m) Both the supervisors and the PhD student are required to report and are expected to participate in evaluations as specified in the current routines for [quality assurance of study programmes](#) at VID.
- n) The PhD student and the main supervisor must write a progress report including a plan for the ensuing period on the annual PhD Programme report form. g) It is expected that all doctoral students employed by VID participates actively in one of VIDs research groups.

2. The training component

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree, reviews the agreements affiliated with the implementation of the PhD Programme in § 8. Please refer to the programme descriptions for the respective PhD Programmes. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) Within the first three months of admission, an individual education plan must be developed for each PhD student. The individual education plan may be revised in consultation with the main supervisor and the academic director for the relevant PhD Programme.
- b) The Centre Director, or the employee authorized to act on behalf of the Centre Director, approves the required training component. Application for approval of the training component must be sent to the centre. The training component will be approved, provided the student has completed, passed and has approval of all required courses, presentations and conference participation. The confirmation must be sent to the student no later than four weeks after such approval has been requested.

3. Mid-term evaluation

Please refer to the PhD Regulations § 9, especially § 9.2, and the separate guidelines for mid-

term evaluation. A Mid-term evaluation is mandatory in the PhD programme and is included as the foundation for applying for assessment of the thesis for public defence. Thus, the mid-term evaluation is governed by §§ 4-7, 4-8 (3) and 4-13 (3) in the [Act relating to Universities and University Colleges](#) and § 5-5 in the regulations concerning the [PhD Degree at VID Specialized University](#) and guidelines concerning cheating or attempts at cheating at VID Specialized University.

The student's main supervisor is expected to be present at the evaluation. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) It is expected that a Doctoral student should complete the midterm evaluation no later than 18 months from the starting date, calculated based on full-time PhD study.
- b) The evaluation committee shall document their assessment of the project in a protocol.
- c) The external evaluator at the midterm evaluation may be appointed as member of the evaluation committee of the PhD thesis.

4. Final evaluation

The doctoral student is offered a final evaluation 2-3 months before the thesis is expected to be submitted, in the form of a final seminar, alternatively a final reading ("sluttseminar", alternative "sluttlesning"), with one (1) evaluator. Based on a draft of the thesis text, the student must be given an assessment of an advisory nature for the remaining work on the thesis. The main supervisor, in consultation with the doctoral student, is responsible for arranging the final evaluation. The evaluator of the final evaluation cannot be a member of the committee for assessment of the PhD thesis. Refer to separate procedural guidelines for final evaluation.

5. Thesis requirements

Thesis requirements are reviewed in § 10 of the University's PhD regulations. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) The thesis may be submitted as a monograph or a collection of several smaller pieces (a so-called article-based thesis). Please refer to the specifications in the programme descriptions of the respective PhD Programmes.
- b) The thesis should contain an abstract in both English and Norwegian. The abstract is 6 excluded from the word count of the thesis. It is permissible to place the abstract before the beginning of the thesis pagination.
- c) The thesis should normally be written in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Danish. A monograph does normally not exceed 100 000 words, excluding bibliography regardless of reference style. If a monograph exceeds 100 000 words, the student must file an application to the Doctoral Committee before submitting the thesis. The Doctoral Committee approval must be submitted together with the thesis. Monographs exceeding 120 000 words are likely to be rejected.
- d) The following rules apply to article-based thesis:
 - The thesis must consist of at least three articles. The PhD student must be the sole or the lead author on at least 50% of the articles. The candidate's own contribution to each of articles must be documented in a signed co-authorship declaration that must be submitted together with the thesis.
 - At least one of the articles must be published or be accepted for publication in a recognized, peer-reviewed, and preferably international, journal by the time of

submission. The remaining articles must be accepted for publication or in a publishable format.

- The PhD student must be the sole author of the introductory chapter ("kappe")
- The scope of the introductory chapter must be 50-100 pages (20 000-40 000 words, exclusive of bibliographical references regardless of reference style).
- The introductory chapter must account for the context of the thesis and ensure that it appears as a unified piece of work. The thesis's contribution to the field of research must be clarified.

6. Research ethics

- The thesis must be written in accordance with the national guidelines for research ethics in the relevant academic discipline and the University's guidelines for research ethics.
- If the thesis includes the processing of personal data, the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research ([Sikt](#)) must be notified at least 30 days before the data collection commences. Data must be collected, processed and stored in accordance with VID's guidelines for research data and personal data protection.
- Research projects which are governed by the Act on Medical and Health Research (of 1 July 2009) must be approved in advance by the Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK) and processed in accordance with the regulations for organising medical and health related research of the same date.

7. Mandatory termination

- d) If the condition for mandatory termination of the PhD education (ref §5.5) are met due to delays or lack of progression, the Centre Director shall submit the case to the relevant Doctoral Committee
- e) If the conditions for mandatory of the PhD education are met due to academic misconduct, the case is considered by the Appeals Committee (Nemd for studentsaker). The Centre Director submits the case to the Appeals Committee at VID.

PART 4. COMPLETION (§§12-22)

1. Submission of the thesis

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree, review submission of the thesis in § 13. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) The thesis must be submitted electronically to post@vid.no marked "Submission of PhD thesis (FIRST NAME LAST NAME)" together with the following:
 - Application for thesis assessment (separate form)
 - A digital version of the thesis in PDF-format and word-format
 - Documentation of approved training component
 - Publication form
 - Declaration of co-authorship, where applicable, cf §5.1 of VID's PhD regulation.
 - Documentation of approvals/recommendations from REK, Sikt or other institutions, cf §13-1 of VID's PhD regulation.

- If copyright restrictions apply to one or more of the articles, the student is requested to submit a separate file with a publishable version of the thesis, where these articles are listed and replaced in the thesis by title pages containing the correct bibliographical reference to the articles.

2. Appointment of the Assessment Committee

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree review the appointment of the Assessment Committee in § 14. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) Prior to submission of the thesis, the main supervisor must submit to the Centre Director, a reasoned recommendation of names for members of the Assessment Committee. The recommendation must demonstrate how each member represents relevant expertise and how the committee combined represent the academic discipline of the thesis. The Centre Director presents the case to the Doctoral Committee for approval.
- b) The Doctoral Committee must ensure that the suggested members are impartial and have no close relationship with any of the parties in the doctoral thesis. All parties are required to specify any relationship with the suggested committee members which may have significance for the evaluation of partiality. This requirement is applicable not only to the PhD student and potential committee members, but also to academic supervisors. Note the provision in Part 3, section 4 that the external evaluator for the 90% evaluation cannot be member of the evaluation committee for the PhD thesis.
- c) The PhD student will be notified of the suggested composition of the committee and is entitled to comment on the suggestion within one week.
- d) The Chair of the Doctoral Committee appoints the Assessment Committee based on the Doctoral Committee's discussion on suggested committee members, and he/she may also appoint members who have not been suggested, if this is considered necessary to obtain a committee that is composed in compliance with current criteria.
- e) The Assessment Committee should normally be appointed two weeks after the submission of the thesis.

3. The Assessment Committee's work with the recommendation

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree review the Assessment Committees work with the recommendation in § 15. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) The coordinator of the Assessment Committee is responsible for organising the committee work, ensuring that there is no delay in getting started and that its recommendation is completed no later than three (3) months after the committee has received the thesis. The coordinator must also ensure that a potential date for the disputation is set as soon as the committee has started their work. The coordinator must help structure the committee's recommendation and organise the various tasks between members of the committee during the disputation. The coordinator must ensure that the committee operates in accordance with both the regulations for the PhD Degree at VID, the additional provisions, and «[Guidelines to assessment of Norwegian PhD Degrees](#)», recommended by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions 22 March 2007.
- b) The recommendation must be sent to VID Specialized University, care of the Chair of the Doctoral Committee

4. Publication of the thesis

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree review the errata list and publication in § 15.4 and § 18. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) After submitting the thesis, the PhD student may apply for permission to correct formal errors. Application and errata list must be submitted no later than four (4) weeks before the committee's recommendation submission deadline and can only occur once.
- b) When the thesis has been approved for public defence, VID will print a limited number of the thesis for the University's series of thesis.
- c) The thesis must be available to the public no later than two weeks prior to the disputation. The thesis will be published on the University's website. The Library will assist in the digital publication.
- d) The thesis is also submitted digitally for storage in the University's institutional archive VID Open.
- e) On publication of the thesis, PhD students who are employed by VID shall follow the guidelines for addressing at VID and submit VIDs address. External students shall submit VID's address along with their main employer's address on publications. This also applies to work that is wholly or mainly completed during the PhD education but published at a later date.

5. Implementation of the trial lecture and disputation

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree review the trial lecture and disputation in § 19. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) The Assessment Committee determines the subject for the trial lecture and submits it to the Centre Director for the respective programme no later than three weeks before the trial lecture. The doctoral candidate will be notified of the subject 10 working days before the trial lecture. The chairperson of the defence will also lead the trial lecture.
- b) The trial lecture can be the same day, or the day before, the disputation. The disputation leader welcomes and introduces the doctoral candidate. The entire assessment committee is expected to be present at the trial lecture.
- c) The trial lecture is scheduled to last 45 minutes. After the lecture, the candidate may take questions.
- d) The trial lecture is designed for the doctoral candidate to demonstrate his/her ability to communicate research-based knowledge. The lecture should normally be targeted to an audience with an education level equivalent to that of advanced students, would find beneficial.
- e) The committee's assessment of the trial lecture will be announced before the disputation. If the trial lecture is not approved, the disputation can still be completed and a new trial lecture arranged on a new subject. The candidate will neither be conferred nor receive a doctoral diploma before a trial lecture is approved.
- f) The entire assessment committee is expected to be present at the disputation. If a member of the committee is unable to, or does not attend, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee is authorised to appoint a substitute member. This member cannot be first opponent during the disputation. If it is not possible to find a substitute member for the disputation, the disputation must be postponed.

6. Conferring and diploma

The University's regulations for the PhD Degree review the conferring and issuing of diploma in § 21. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) The diploma will be published in Vitnemålsportalen. Doctoral student without access to Vitnemålsportalen will be issued an electronic version by the respective Centre.
- b) The PhD certificate will be produced in paper format.