



Guidelines and additional provisions for the PhD programmes at VID Specialized University.

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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 (2024), the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQR, 2011, revised 2014), the Regulations for Universities and University Colleges (2024), Regulations on Degrees and Vocational Education, Protected Titles and Standardised Study Periods at Universities and University Colleges (2005), Regulations on Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Vocational Education (2011), og European Charter for Researchers (2025).

1. The responsibility for the PhD Programmes

- a) The Board of the Institution is ultimately responsible for the PhD Programmes.
- b) The Research Committee 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 Research Committee is responsible for the regulations, the guidelines and has the authority to suggest additional provisions.
- c) The Doctoral Committees 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. Separate guidelines have been established for the Doctoral Committees.

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 a post-qualification evaluation conversation (after the candidate has defended their thesis)
- Evaluation of PhD courses (every 3rd year of teaching. For new or revised courses, the course should be evaluated after the first year of teaching)
- 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 therein, must be approved first by the relevant Doctoral Committee 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:

- a) 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.
- b) VID normally funds only one Research Fellow period per doctoral candidate and only if said candidate does not already hold a PhD/doctoral degree.
- c) The Doctoral Committee approve admissions of externally financed PhD candidates and VID research fellows who are appointed without an expert assessment of a complete project outline.
- d) The Doctoral Committee assesses all applications based on academic qualifications with the assistance of either internal or external reviewers.
- e) 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.
- f) Applications for admission are assessed according to the criteria specified in § 5 of the regulation and any additional provisions specified in the respective PhD Programme specifications.
- g) VID normally requires that the applicant has an average grade from their Master's degree or equivalent education (equivalent to 120 ECTS credits) of B or better, according to VID's grading scale. VID's admission committee pay particular attention to the scientific quality of the Master thesis. Applicants with a lower grade and/or less ECTS, may be admitted to the PhD programme provided documentation is presented that they are otherwise qualified to meet the requirements of the programme.
- h) Applicants must document their English competency.

International applicants must document their English competency by passing one of the following tests:

- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language with a result of 90 or above on internet-Based Test (iBT)
- IELTS - International English Language Testing Service with a result of 6.5 or above
- PTE Academic - Pearson Test of English Academic with a result of 62 or above

The following applicants are normally exempt:

- Applicants from EU/EEA countries and /or Council of Europe/UNESCO-Cepes who have studied English as a Foreign Language over a period of minimum 7 years of secondary and further education (EQF 3/4). It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the necessary documentation to verify this.
- Applicants who have completed a Bachelor's and/or Master's degree taught in English
- Applicants who have passed an EQF level 4 qualification in English

In case of doubt, any applicant may be asked to document their English competency.

- i) Appointment of academic supervisor(s): The appointment of supervisors, normally one main

supervisor and once co-supervisor, is made by the DOCTORAL COMMITTEE based on the Centre Director's academic assessment. Any adjustments to the supervisory team are also decided by the Doctoral Committee. The contribution of each supervisor and their expected scope are formalised in the Supervisor Agreement

- j) Within three (3) months of 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:
- i. Scientific Quality
 - ii. Feasibility
 - iii. 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.

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 Research Fellow 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 candidates with funding from other employers or PhD candidates 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 Research Fellows' 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-2024-05-31-26/§6-4. The following additional provisions apply for PhD candidates 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 Candidate commits at least 50% of their time to the PhD Programme.
 - The type of tasks allocated must be relevant for the career progression of the PhD candidate's research work and should, as far as possible, help develop competencies for a future career within the academia, community 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
- All employees are governed by the current laws and agreements regarding working hours, annual leave and sick leave.
 - All absences must be recorded in accordance with the provisions outlined in the [Personnel Handbook](#). Where an absence warrants an extension, the revised contractual end date will be calculated automatically, and the PhD Research Fellow will be duly notified by HR.
 - Union representation work is normally compensated with two additional weeks, either as part of 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 the union representative period is completed.
 - Applications for extension based on other grounds must be submitted in accordance with the provisions outlined in the [Personnel Handbook](#).

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 candidate 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 candidate'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 candidate fails to complete within the prescribed period, they may apply for up to 40 hours of additional academic supervision. The application must include a progress plan and be recommended by the PhD candidate'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 candidate who has been admitted to the programme for the duration of the prescribed period of study and has successfully completed their studies, but who has, for whatever reason, left the programme, may, at any given time, submit his/her thesis for assessment.

PART 3. PROGRESSION (§§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:

- a) During their thesis work, the PhD candidates are entitled to academic supervision, and they

are expected to actively engage with this entitlement. Please refer to the admission agreement to the organised PhD Programme at VID.

- b) The academic supervisor is responsible for monitoring the PhD candidate's academic development. The candidate has the right to receive feedback on submitted text within reasonable time. The following guidelines apply:
 - One week to respond for drafts for chapters/articles (maximum 30 pages).
 - Three weeks to respond for reading through a full monograph. The candidate can only expect the supervisor to read through the entire thesis once.
 - Two weeks to respond 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.
 - 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.
- c) 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 candidates and any supplementary work.
- d) Normally, at least one of the supervisors must have VID as their main employer.
- e) Both the supervisors and the PhD candidate 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.
- f) The PhD candidate 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 candidates 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 candidate. 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 candidate has completed, passed and has approval of all required courses, presentations and conference participation. The confirmation must be sent to the candidate 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 candidate's main supervisor is expected to be present at the evaluation. The following additional provisions apply:

- a) It is expected that a doctoral candidate 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. 90% evaluation seminar

2-3 months before final submission, the candidate have the option of a 90% evaluation seminar ("sluttseminar", alternative "sluttlesning") with an external reviewer. Based on the draft thesis, the candidate should receive an assessment and ensuing advice for the remaining work required on the thesis. The main supervisor is, together with the candidate, responsible for organizing the 90% evaluation. The external evaluator cannot be appointed as member of the evaluation committee after submission of the thesis. Refer to separate procedural guidelines for 90% evaluation seminar.

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 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 candidate 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 candidate must be the sole or the lead author on at least 50% of the articles. The extent of the candidate's own contribution must be documented in a signed co-authorship declaration for each multiple-author article. The co-authorship declaration(s) 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 candidate must be the sole author of the introductory chapter ("kappe")
 - The scope of the introductory chapter is 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

- a) The thesis must be written in accordance with the national guidelines for research ethics in the relevant academic discipline and VID's guidelines for research ethics.
- b) 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.
- c) 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

- a) 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
- b) 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 candidate is requested to submit a separate file with a publishable version of the thesis. By publishable version, it is meant that the thesis includes a list of the articles and the articles themselves are replaced by title pages containing the correct bibliographical reference to the articles.
- b) An administrative plagiarism control will be conducted before the thesis is submitted to the Assessment Committee. The Centre Director receives the plagiarism report.

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

declare 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 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 candidate 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 candidates who are employed by VID shall follow the guidelines for addressing at VID and submit VID's address. External candidates 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. The Trial Lecture and Disputation (viva voce)

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 serve as 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 candidates without access to Vitnemålsportalen will be issued a paper version issued by the respective Centre.
- b) The PhD certificate will be issued in paper format.