

Guidelines for doctoral defense at the University of Borås

1. Determination of the defense date

The defense date is determined by the Artistic Research and Education board or by the Research Education committees following a proposal from the supervisor and doctoral student. A decision regarding the defense date should normally be made no later than 50 working days before planned defense. The board or the committee must have received confirmation that the intended discussant and prospective examination board members are available during the intended date.

2. Periods for public defense¹

- a) The public defense may take place during the following periods: August 20th – December 22nd and January 10th – Thursday before Midsummer.
- b) The nailing time is 3 weeks. The periods June 16th – August 15th as well as December 23rd- January 6th may *not* be included in the nailing time.
For example, if the public defense takes place on the 24th of August, you need to nail your thesis no later than the 5th of June in order to follow the 3-week rule.
- c) Public defense may not take place on public holidays or das that can be considered associated with holidays (eg May 1st).

3. The composition of the examination board

- a) An examination board should consist of three or five members in addition to a substitute in the event that one of the appointed board members will fail to attend.
- b) The members of the examination board shall have the formal merits/positions corresponding to associate professor or professor.

¹ The periods in 2a and b are also valid for licentiate seminars.

- c) Under special circumstances a board member with a PhD can also be appointed.
- d) The majority of the ordinary members of the examination board must be retrieved outside the University of Borås.
- e) Supervisors may not be included in the examination board
- f) The gender equality aspect must be taken into consideration when appointing members for the examination board.

4. Appointment of discussant and examination board

A discussant and an examination board are appointed for each public defense. A decision should be made by the Artistic Research and Education Board or the Research education committee no later than 50 working days prior to the defense date. The discussant and the members of the examination board will be notified of the formal decision to appoint them.

5. Printing of thesis

- a) A recommendation is that the thesis should be printed in sufficient time in order for three copies to be submitted to the university's library no later than 5 working days prior to the intended nailing ceremony. The responsible person to ensure that a printed sample is available during the nailing ceremony is the doctoral student.
- b) Before printing, ISBNs and permanent URLs must be obtained from the library so that the information can be printed in the thesis. In the printing process, the printer ensures that the copies are sent to the national libraries.
- c) The doctoral student should also prepare the digital publication in such a timely manner that the university's library can review the e-publications no later than five working days before the nailing ceremony.

6. The nailing ceremony and the advertising of the public defense

The nailing ceremony must take place no later than 15 working days before the public defense. The nailing ceremony makes the thesis public and the ceremony takes place in the university library. At the

same time the thesis is published electronically in the university's system for digital publication (DIVA). The public defense is announced on the university's web page with the name of the doctoral student, the title of the thesis, date and venue for defense and a summary of the thesis. Responsible for the advertisement is the faculty research officer.

7. The public defense

The public defense must be chaired by a chairman appointed by the committee or by the artistic board. It is each committee/board that has to decide what formal requirements should be met in order to be able to be assigned chairman of the public defense. The audience of the public defense has the right to ask the respondent questions in the order the chairman decides.

8. Grade

- a) The doctoral thesis must be assessed with one of the grades *failed* or *approved*. The grading must take into account both the content of the thesis and the defense of the thesis.
- b) The grade for the doctoral thesis shall be determined by an examination board. See heading 3 for the rules in regards to the composition of the examination board.

9. The examination boards meeting and decision

- a) The examination board appoints a chair of the board.
- b) For the thesis relevant persons, for example the main supervisor, examiner and discussant, should be available in order to answer any questions the examination board might have. However, these persons do not have the right to participate in the examination board's decision.
- c) The examination board is quorate when all members are present. Majority decision applies.
- d) Only in cases where the thesis is given the grade *failed*, the reasons/motivation for the board's decision is reported in the

meetings minutes. The same applies if one of the examination board members is of a different view of than the majority decision.

10. Minutes and doctoral degree diploma

Minutes from the examination board meeting is sent to the university's graduation officer directly after the decision has been made.

The doctoral candidate must apply for a degree diploma and submit the required form that all courses within the program are finished. The graduation officer checks that all conditions for the doctoral degree are fulfilled before the diploma is issued and signed by the vice-chancellor.

11. Conflict of interest

The examination board's decision equates to exercise of public authority. This means that the examination board is subject to the same regulations as, for example, the doctoral student's examiner. Among other things, a member of the examination board can be held responsible if he or she has "intentionally or through negligence in the exercise of public authority override what applies to the task".

Members of the examination board also have to abide the Swedish administrative law concerning conflict of interest.

Out of five listed conflicts of interest situations it is predominately the following two situations that are relevant for board members.

- a) Personal involvement, interest or family conflict of interest:
Occurs if the decision concerns the person himself, his/her spouse, parent, child, sibling or any other close relative; and if the outcome of the case can bring about considerable benefit or damage to the person himself or any of his/her related family members.
- b) Neighbor or delicate disqualification. Occurs if there is other circumstances that are likely to influence the impartiality of the board member. Defining precisely what constitutes delicacy is almost impossible; the Swedish research community is relatively small. It becomes almost impossible to put together a completely impartial examination board.

For example, cases where a delicacy conflict of interest may be considered to be present:

- When a board member has co-authored an article with the doctoral student (Although the article is not included in the thesis).
- When a board member, at any point in time, has participated in supervision of the doctoral student.
- When a board member is in dependence or debt of gratitude with the supervisor or the doctoral student. Alternatively that the supervisor and the board member has a close collaboration. It can be discussed whether it is appropriate for a member to have been co-authoring articles with the supervisor in recent years.