



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

# **Aarhus BSS Graduate School**

## **Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University**

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### ***Rules and guidelines for the PhD degree programme***

***Effective as of 15 November 2023***

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## Content

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Preface</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>1. Purpose</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2. PhD field programmes</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3. Structure and management</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| 3.1. Head of graduate school   | 6         |
| 3.2. PhD committee   | 7         |
| 3.3. Field committees  | 7         |
| <b>4. Admission, application and assessment</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| 4.1. Admission requirements  | 8         |
| 4.2. Requirements for applications   | 8         |
| 4.2.1. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the three-year scheme | 9         |
| 4.2.2. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the four-year scheme  | 9         |
| 4.2.3. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the five-year scheme  | 10        |
| 4.3. Assessment of applications  | 10        |
| <b>5. Funding and framework of enrolment</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| 5.1. Funding methods   | 11        |
| 5.2. Framework conditions  | 12        |
| <b>6. Employment and enrolment terms</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| 6.1. Mandatory attendance  | 12        |
| 6.2. Part-time enrolment   | 13        |
| 6.3. Part-time enrolment in connection with external employment                          | 13        |
| 6.4. Leave of absence  | 13        |
| 6.5. Sideline employment   | 14        |
| 6.6. Application for changes   | 14        |
| 6.7. Staff Development Dialogue (SDD)  | 14        |
| <b>7. Content of the PhD degree programme</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| 7.1. PhD courses   | 14        |
| 7.2. Change of research environment – stays abroad                                       | 15        |
| 7.3. Teaching experience and knowledge dissemination                                     | 16        |
| 7.4. Project presentations   | 16        |
| 7.5. Participation in workshops and conferences  | 17        |
| 7.6. Particulars on enrolment prior to completion of Master's degree programme           | 17        |
| 7.7. Project descriptions (including preliminary project descriptions)                   | 18        |
| <b>8. The PhD plan</b>   | <b>18</b> |
| 8.1. Regular update of PhD plan  | 18        |
| 8.2. Content of PhD plan   | 19        |
| <b>9. Evaluation of the PhD plan</b>   | <b>20</b> |
| 9.1. Regular plan evaluation   | 20        |
| 9.2. Extraordinary plan evaluation   | 21        |
| 9.3. Negative assessment of progress   | 21        |
| 9.4. Annual assessment by board of supervisors   | 22        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>10. Supervision</b>                                       | <b>22</b> |
| 10.1. Approval of supervisors                                | 22        |
| 10.2. Allocation of supervisors                              | 23        |
| 10.3. Roles and responsibilities of supervisors              | 23        |
| 10.4. Change of supervisor                                   | 23        |
| <b>11. Advancing to PhD candidacy</b>                        | <b>23</b> |
| 11.1. PhD dissertation                                       | 23        |
| 11.2. Timely submission of dissertation                      | 24        |
| 11.3. Approval of PhD degree programme                       | 24        |
| 11.4. Submission of PhD dissertation without prior enrolment | 24        |
| 11.5. Termination of enrolment                               | 25        |
| <b>12. Assessment and defence of PhD dissertation</b>        | <b>25</b> |
| 12.1. Appointment of assessment committee                    | 25        |
| 12.2. Role of assessment committee                           | 25        |
| 12.3. Preliminary assessment and pre-defence                 | 26        |
| 12.4. Publication of dissertation before the defence         | 27        |
| 12.5. Submission of revised PhD dissertation – resubmission  | 27        |
| 12.6. Date of defence  | 28        |
| 12.7. Public defence   | 28        |
| 12.8. Award of PhD degree                                    | 28        |
| <b>13. Other provisions</b>                                  | <b>29</b> |
| 13.1. Complaints and dispensation                            | 29        |
| 13.2. Commencement and interim provisions                    | 29        |

## Preface

The following guidelines for the PhD degree programme at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, have been developed on the basis of the PhD Order, the University Act and the Aarhus University by-laws.

The guidelines contain general provisions for the completion of the PhD degree programme at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University. The individual PhD field programmes may develop local guidelines within the framework of these general provisions. Aarhus BSS HR & PhD offers support to the graduate school and the head of graduate school on HR and study-related matters. If you have any questions about the PhD degree programme, please ask Aarhus BSS HR & PhD, who will expedite the case.

The guidelines apply to all students enrolled on the PhD degree programme at Aarhus BSS, regardless of funding method.

The PhD degree programme at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, is structured within the framework of the *Aarhus BSS Graduate School* (subsequently *the graduate school*). Further information on academic matters related to the PhD degree programme can be found on the graduate school website and on the department websites. Aarhus BSS consists of the following departments:

- Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences
- Department of Law
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Management
- Department of Economics and Business Economics
- Department of Business Development and Technology

All PhD students enrolled at the graduate school will be affiliated with one of these departments.

## 1. Purpose

The PhD degree programme constitutes the highest level of research training in an academic field. The programme must therefore provide enrolled PhD students with knowledge of the research methods and theoretical foundation of the relevant research fields in such a way that it enables graduates to apply research methodologies and theories in the field in an independent and critical way, thereby fostering new knowledge and further developing the field. In this connection, emphasis shall be put on both breadth and depth of knowledge as well as ability to place the field in a broader perspective. Formally and specifically, the PhD student must contribute to the field in the form of independent research in a limited area and a scientific PhD dissertation of high academic standard. To maintain the high quality of its PhD degree programmes, Aarhus University has developed five basic principles which are to support PhD students in their development as independent researchers during their PhD degree programmes. The central focus of the principles is to safeguard the PhD students' academic development by addressing the appropriate level of independence at the five different stages of the PhD degree programme: the project description, supervision, PhD studies, the PhD project, and the dissertation. The five basic principles are described in more detail on the Aarhus University website<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://phd.au.dk/strategy-and-collaboration/basic-principles-of-phd-education/>

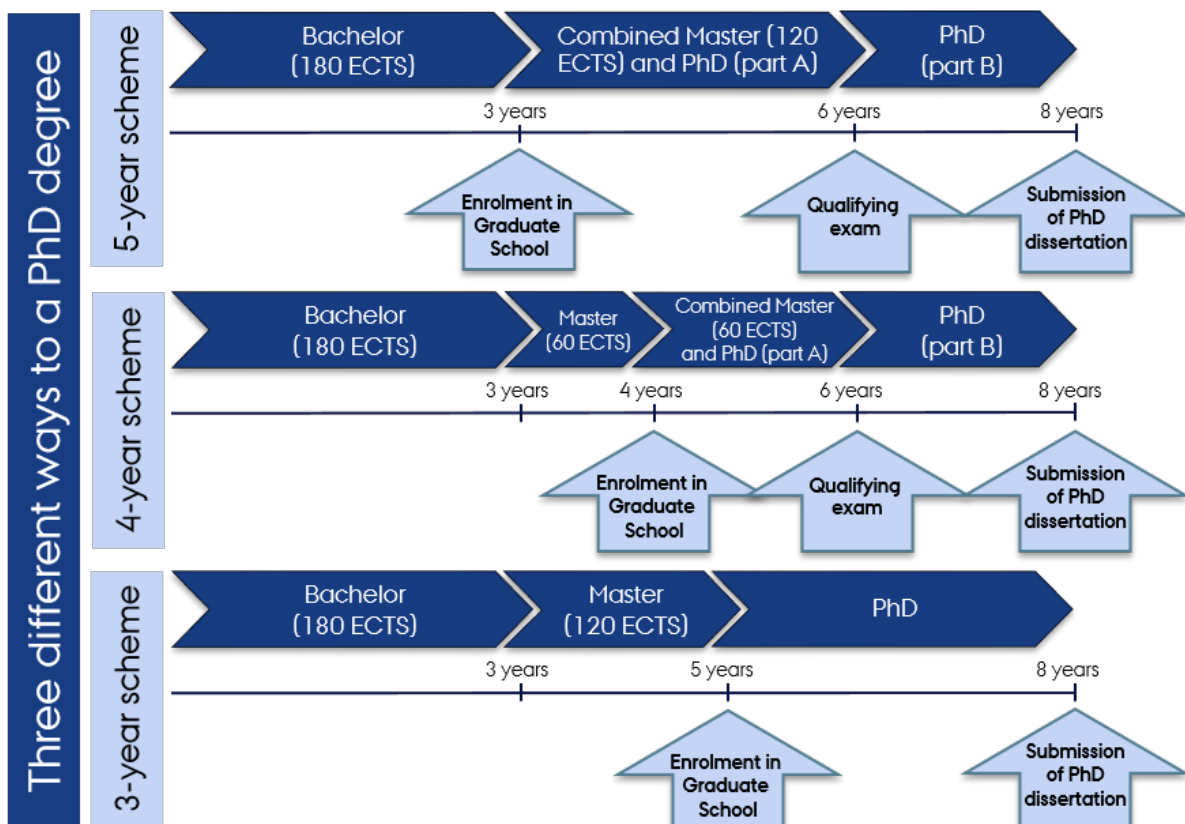
The purpose of the PhD degree programme is to provide PhD students with the necessary qualifications for holding positions that require possession of research qualifications. In particular academic staff positions at university level and positions in the public or private sectors or in Danish and international organisations requiring a particularly high degree of specialisation and particular individual qualifications.

## 2. PhD field programmes

The graduate school offers the following seven field programmes:

- Psychology and Behavioural Sciences (Psykologi)
- Political Science (Statskundskab)
- Management (Virksomhedsledelse)
- Economics and Business Economics (Økonomi)
- Law (Jura)
- Business Development and Technology (Forretningsudvikling og Teknologi)
- Social Sciences and Business (Samfund og Erhverv)

Each of the seven field programmes offers several different schemes (please see Figure 1 and the text below). However, the programme in Social Sciences and Business is offered as a three-year scheme only.



**Figure 1: Three different paths to a PhD degree.** The figure shows the three different PhD schemes that are available. In all three schemes, the PhD degree programme is structured as a three-year full-time study based on a three-year Bachelor's degree and a two-year Master's degree (both full-time studies).

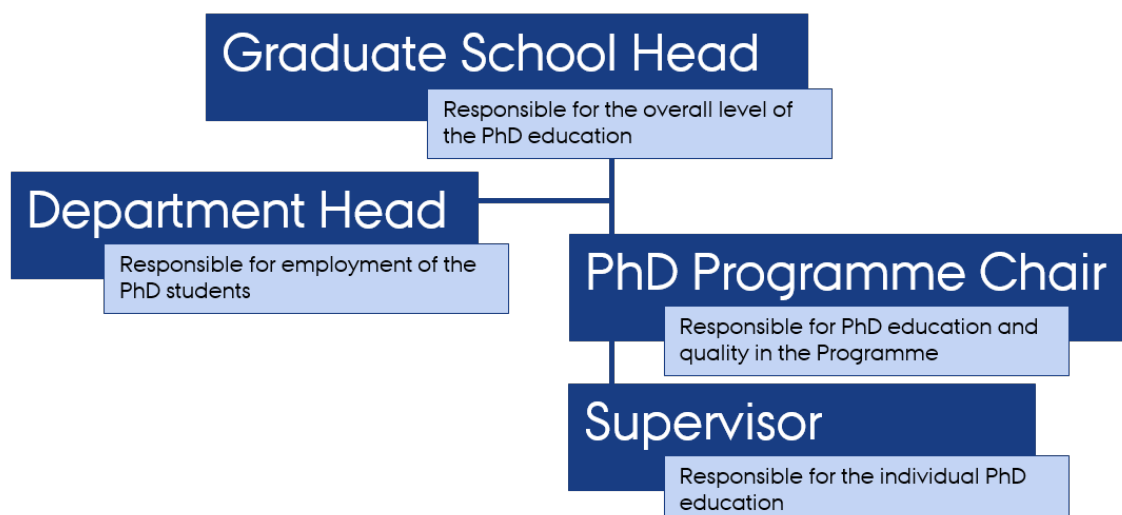
**The three-year scheme (5+3):** To be considered for admission, students must hold a relevant Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) and a relevant Master's degree (120 ECTS credits) prior to enrolment.

**The four-year scheme (4+4):** To be considered for admission, PhD students must hold a relevant Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) and have completed course work corresponding to 60 ECTS credits on a relevant Master's degree programme, which may constitute part of – or be eligible for credit transfer into – one of the Master's degree programmes offered at Aarhus BSS. Alternatively, students must have completed relevant course work corresponding to 240 ECTS credits prior to enrolment. During the first two years, PhD students will be enrolled in both the Master's degree programme and the PhD degree programme (concurrent enrolment). At the end of the second year, students will achieve the Master's degree in one of the Master's degree programmes offered at Aarhus BSS. For the remaining two years, students will be enrolled as PhD students only.

**The five-year scheme (3+5):** To be considered for admission, students must hold a relevant Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits). Alternatively, students must have completed relevant course work corresponding to 180 ECTS credits prior to enrolment. During the first three years, PhD students will be enrolled in both the Master's degree programme and the PhD degree programme (concurrent enrolment). At the end of the second year, students will achieve the Master's degree in one of the Master's degree programmes offered at Aarhus BSS. For the remaining two years, students will be enrolled as PhD students only.

### 3. Structure and management

The organisation of the graduate school can be seen in Figure 2. The head of graduate school is responsible for the overall level of the PhD degree programme, which is described in more detail in section 3.1. The head of department is responsible for the management of all department staff, including the employed PhD students. The PhD programme chair is responsible for the programme and quality of the PhD field programme, while the principal supervisor is responsible for the education of individual PhD students.



**Figure 2: The organisation of the graduate school.** The figure illustrates the different levels of responsibility in relation to the PhD degree programme and the employment of PhD students.

#### 3.1. Head of graduate school

The vice-dean for research and talent development is also the head of the graduate school. At Aarhus BSS, the head of graduate school is responsible for the operation and financing of the graduate school, rules and regulations governing

the graduate school, the quality of the PhD programmes offered (including evaluation of the programmes), as well as the organisation of the cooperation between PhD field programmes, field committees, heads of department and the administration. Furthermore, the head of graduate school is (on behalf of the dean) responsible for any cooperation which the graduate school may have with other graduate schools at Aarhus University or with other national and international universities, as well as any collaboration on PhD degree programmes with companies. The head of graduate school is also responsible for ensuring that an independent, international evaluation of the PhD degree programme at Aarhus BSS is carried out on a regular basis (approximately every fifth year) and for the organisational framework surrounding this evaluation.

### **3.2. PhD committee**

The head of graduate school is supported by the PhD committee. The PhD committee is a joint committee consisting of an equal number of tenured members of academic staff and PhD students from – and elected by – the academic staff and enrolled PhD students at each department. Each field programme may elect one member of academic staff and one PhD student for the committee. The PhD committee must appoint a committee chair among the members of academic staff and a vice committee chair among the elected PhD students. The committee chair must organise the work of the committee in cooperation with the head of graduate school, the field committees (please see section 3.3. below for more details on field committees), and the elected PhD students. He/she must also chair committee meetings. Administrative support for the PhD committee is provided by Aarhus BSS HR & PhD.

The responsibilities of the PhD committee include:

- approving PhD courses
- preparing proposals for the head of graduate school on internal guidelines for the graduate school
- issuing statements to the head of graduate school concerning evaluation of the PhD degree programme and PhD supervision
- approving applications for credit transfer and exemption requests submitted by PhD students
- discussing and commenting on other matters of importance to the PhD degree programme and PhD supervision, which are presented to the PhD committee through the head of graduate school or one of the field committees.

### **3.3. Field committees**

Once a year, committees for the individual PhD field programmes are appointed as of 1 February. Field committees consist of a member from the PhD committee (the PhD programme chair) and at least three other ordinary representatives of tenured academic staff within the department in question. Field committee members are appointed by the dean in accordance with the recommendation by the head of the relevant department.

Ordinary members of the field committee for Social Sciences and Business are appointed by the dean in accordance with the recommendation by the head of graduate school. The head of graduate school must ensure that the composition of the field committees reflects the diversity of the academic expertise present within each of the PhD field programmes.

Each field committee possesses the academic competence to develop and manage the PhD programme within the relevant field of study. The field committee must therefore discuss all major issues concerning its academic field before such are presented to the PhD committee for the entire graduate school. The field committee must also advise the head of graduate school on all academic issues concerning the PhD field programme in question. Furthermore, the field committee performs the role of enrolment and appointment committee for the PhD field programme in question and must assess all applications for admission to the graduate school.

## 4. Admission, application and assessment

### 4.1. Admission requirements

**Three-year scheme:** Enrolment in the three-year PhD scheme requires that applicants can document that they hold a relevant Master's degree at the time of enrolment. The Master's degree must be obtained on the basis of two years of full-time study and a relevant Bachelor's degree obtained on the basis of three years of full-time study or the equivalent. Applicants must hence provide documentation demonstrating fundamental and broad knowledge of research theory and methods within the academic field in question. Thorough knowledge of research theory and methods of direct relevance to the PhD project is not sufficient.

**Four-year scheme:** Applicants for the four-year scheme at the graduate school must – over the course of the PhD degree programme – pursue the completion of a Master's degree at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University. The admission requirements for the four-year scheme therefore reflect the admission requirements on the Master's degree programme in question, and applicants must – at the time of enrolment – provide documentation demonstrating an educational background corresponding to a relevant Bachelor's degree (obtained by completion of three years of full-time study) and Master's studies of at least 60 ECTS credits and no more than 90 ECTS credits, *which must form part of or be eligible for credit transfer into one of the Master's degree programmes offered at Aarhus BSS* (or, alternatively, must have completed relevant course work corresponding to 240 ECTS credits within the academic field in question and of relevance to the PhD project). Furthermore, certain combinations of completed courses may be required, depending on the current academic regulations governing the Master's degree programme in question. Applicants must hence provide documentation demonstrating fundamental and broad knowledge of research theory and methods within the field in question. As a general rule, applicants must be able to complete – within one year of full-time study – the Master's degree programme (60 ECTS credits) relating to the field programme in which they are enrolled.

**Five-year scheme:** Applicants for the five-year scheme at the graduate school must – over the course of the PhD degree programme – pursue the completion of a Master's degree at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University. The admission requirements for the five-year scheme therefore reflect the admission requirements on the Master's degree programme in question, and applicants must – at the time of enrolment – provide documentation demonstrating an educational background corresponding to a relevant Bachelor's degree obtained by completion of three years of full-time study (or alternatively, must have completed relevant course work corresponding to 180 ECTS credits within the academic field in question and of relevance to the PhD project). Furthermore, certain combinations of completed courses may be required, depending on the current academic regulations governing the Master's degree programme in question. Applicants must hence provide documentation demonstrating fundamental and broad knowledge of research theory and methods within the field in question. As a general rule, applicants must be able to complete – within two years of full-time study – the Master's degree programme (120 ECTS credits) relating to the field programme in which they are enrolled.

These schemes are illustrated by Figure 1.

### 4.2. Requirements for applications

Applicants may apply for admission to a PhD degree programme before the requirements mentioned in 4.1. are met. However, the requirements must be met before the commencement of studies on the PhD degree programme in question.

If the applicant does not have an educational background allowing him/her to complete one of the Master's degree programmes at Aarhus BSS, the applicant cannot enrol in a four or five-year scheme at the graduate school (please refer to 7.6. "Particulars on enrolment prior to completion of Master's degree programme"). Applicants must apply through Aar-



hus University's online application form. The application must include documentation for the applicant's qualifying degree(s), information about the desired PhD project, as well as any external financing. The graduate school reserves the right to reject applications that do not contain all compulsory documents or that do not adhere to the limitations set out below.

#### **4.2.1. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the three-year scheme**

Applications to the three-year (5+3) scheme must contain the following documents within the specified framework:

- Motivation, which must not exceed 2,400 characters (including spaces). The number of characters must be stated in the document.
- Curriculum vitae (resume)
- Project description for the desired research project, which must not exceed 12,000 characters (including spaces). This includes a description of the topic and the problem statement, suggestions for relevant theory and literature, project hypotheses, considerations on methodology and data, figures/tables as well as a realisable three-year project schedule. If figures and/or tables are included, they constitute 800 characters each, regardless of size. The 12,000 character limitation does not include the list of references. The number of characters must be stated on the first page of the project description. Different types of reference systems are accepted. The graduate school reserves the right to reject the application if the project description exceeds 12,000 characters (including spaces).
- A signed declaration on PhD application with externally financed scholarship, if relevant. See section 5.1. Funding methods, subsection V.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Master's degree diploma. Applicants who have not yet obtained their Master's degree must instead include a document in which this is stated.
  - Transcript of records for the qualifying Master's degree, i.e. information on completed courses and grades obtained on a qualifying Master's degree programme. Applicants who have not yet completed their Master's degree programme must include an updated transcript of records instead.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Bachelor's diploma
  - Transcript of records for the qualifying Bachelor's degree, i.e. information on completed courses and grades obtained on a qualifying Bachelor's degree programme.

#### **4.2.2. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the four-year scheme**

Applications to the four-year (4+4) scheme must contain the following documents within the specified framework:

- Motivation, which must not exceed 2,400 characters (including spaces). The number of characters must be stated in the document.
- Curriculum vitae (resume)
- Preliminary project description for the desired research project, which must not exceed 12,000 characters (including spaces). The description must outline the preliminary plans for developing the PhD dissertation, including proposed topics. If figures and/or tables are included, they constitute 800 characters each, regardless of size. The 12,000 character limitation does not include the list of references. The number of characters must be stated on the first page of the project description. Different types of reference systems are accepted. The graduate school reserves the right to reject the application if the project description exceeds 12,000 characters (including spaces).
- A signed declaration on PhD application with externally financed scholarship, if relevant. See section 5.1. Funding methods, subsection V.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Master's degree diploma. A document stating that the Master's degree has not yet been obtained and that this is an application for the 4+4 scheme must be included instead.

- Transcript of records for the qualifying Master's degree programme or documentation for completed courses and grades corresponding to 60 ECTS credits obtained on a qualifying Master's degree programme.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Bachelor's diploma
  - Transcript of records for the qualifying Bachelor's degree, i.e. information on completed courses and grades obtained on a qualifying Bachelor's degree programme.

#### **4.2.3. The following documents must be uploaded for application to the five-year scheme**

Applications to the five-year (3+5) scheme must contain the following documents within the specified framework:

- Motivation, which must not exceed 2,400 characters (including spaces). The number of characters must be stated in the document.
- Curriculum vitae (resume)
- Preliminary project description for the desired research project in the form of a short outline, which must not exceed 4,800 characters (including spaces). It must contain descriptions of topics that may constitute the preliminary plans for the PhD dissertation. If figures and/or tables are included, they constitute 800 characters each, regardless of size. The number of characters must be stated on the first page of the project description. The graduate school reserves the right to reject the application if the project description exceeds 4,800 characters (including spaces).
- A signed declaration on PhD application with externally financed scholarship, if relevant. See section 5.1. Funding methods, subsection V.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Master's degree diploma. A document stating that the Master's degree has not yet been obtained and that this is an application for the 3+5 scheme must be included instead.
  - Transcript of records for the qualifying Master's degree programme. A document stating that the Master's degree has not yet been obtained and that this is an application for the 3+5 scheme must be included instead.
- A single PDF file containing:
  - Bachelor's diploma. Applicants who have not yet completed the Bachelor's degree must instead include a document stating this.
  - Transcript of records for the qualifying Bachelor's degree, i.e. information on completed courses and grades obtained on a qualifying Bachelor's degree programme. Applicants who have not yet obtained the Bachelor's degree must include an updated transcript of records instead.

#### **4.3. Assessment of applications**

The assessment of the application comprises an overall assessment of the applicant and his/her qualifications. All applicants are assessed on equal terms. Particular weight is attached to the project description, the grades obtained by the applicant during his/her studies, and to whether the applicant, during his/her studies or in another manner, has displayed special skills in writing major papers, e.g. a Master's thesis. Furthermore, the assessment will take into account the applicant's ability to successfully complete the PhD project within the specified framework (including the time frame) of the scheme in question.

The graduate school accepts applications for admission twice a year in connection with the general call for applications. In addition, the graduate school may invite applications for special openings (typically positions within a specific academic field or topic). Application deadlines are announced on the Aarhus BSS website.

After the closing date, all applications will be assessed by the relevant field committee. In case of doubt about programme affiliation, the application will be considered by several field committees. The relevant field committee will prepare a written recommendation concerning each individual applicant. This recommendation must include:

- A brief summary of the applicant's academic qualifications
- A brief assessment of the PhD project specifying the research questions/hypotheses
- A summary of the above stating whether the project is feasible and one of the following conclusions:
  - *Qualified for admission*
  - *Qualified for admission on certain conditions (conditions must be explicitly stated)*
  - *Not qualified for admission*
- If the applicant is assessed as qualified for admission, the recommendation must include suggestions for the role of principal supervisor and co-supervisor.

If the applicant is assessed as qualified for admission on certain conditions, the conditions agreed upon by the field committee must be respected. For instance, these conditions may include proof of relevant language proficiency and completion of Bachelor/Master's degree or achievement of 60 ECTS credits at the time of enrolment. If relevant, a personal interview with the applicant will be held before he/she is recommended for enrolment.

The field committee submits its recommendations to the head of graduate school, who consults the PhD programme chairs and subsequently makes the final recommendation for enrolment.

The head of graduate school will make the final decision on enrolment in cooperation with the other members of the faculty management team.

Subsequently, Aarhus BSS HR & PhD will process letters of employment and enrolment. When the offers of enrolment have been accepted, Aarhus BSS HR & PhD submits rejection letters to the remaining applicants.

## 5. Funding and framework of enrolment

### 5.1. Funding methods

Enrolment requires prior funding approval from the head of graduate school. Several funding methods are available. However, only the first method mentioned below implies employment as a PhD student. For all funding methods, the applicant is required to possess relevant academic qualifications, and the project must be qualified as well as feasible within the academic framework of the graduate school.

- I. **Employment (enrolment including fellowship) at Aarhus BSS:** A fellowship may be funded by internal sources at the graduate school/Aarhus BSS or by external sources such as research councils or other external (private or public) funding sources.
- II. **Industrial PhD fellowship:** Enrolment as an industrial PhD student requires a grant from the Innovation Fund Denmark as well as approval by the head of department and the head of graduate school. In collaboration with the contract unit at Aarhus University, the graduate school will draw up an addendum for the confirmation statement from Innovation Fund Denmark, and in this connection, the teaching obligation and other relevant aspects must be discussed.
- III. **Business partnership PhD:** Enrolment on these terms requires a funding agreement (including a payment profile) with a private or public company, a joint funding agreement drawn up by the graduate school in collaboration with the contract unit at Aarhus University, as well as approval by the head of department and head of graduate school.

- IV. **Self-funded PhD:** Enrolment on these terms requires a funding agreement (including a payment profile) with the enrolled PhD student as well as approval by the head of department and head of graduate school.
- V. **Externally financed scholarship:** At Aarhus University, the following principles apply for admission of PhD students with externally financed scholarships or mobility programme scholarships to PhD programmes.
- PhD students with externally financed scholarships or mobility programmes can only be admitted if financing is in accordance with the AU minimum model, which ensures a reasonable standard of living in Denmark (corresponding to two monthly SU grants; DKK 13,178 per month at 2023 level).
  - PhD students admitted to AU must not have entered into any contracts that might result in potential financial sanctions or retaliation against the PhD student or third party, or that restrict the freedom of research in accordance with Aarhus University's policy for freedom of research, integrity and the responsible conduct of research (link)

The scholarship source and the funding must be documented at the time of application and prior to enrolment. In connection with their applications, applicants (who are not employed at AU) with externally financed scholarships or mobility programme scholarships must sign a declaration setting out the above terms and principles. The declaration focuses on the rights of PhD students, as well as their financial security, freedom of research and optimal conditions throughout their PhD.

The costs of enrolment on category number II-V can be found at the graduate school website under Financing.

## 5.2. Framework conditions

The graduate school must cover expenses that are required for completion of an approved PhD project for employed PhD students holding fellowships provided by the graduate school (category number I above). Operating costs for such PhD degree programmes remain the responsibility of the graduate school, and the graduate school is thus responsible for covering necessary expenses in relation to an approved PhD degree programme. The graduate school has developed a standard framework for financial support of academic activities related to PhD projects, and this financial framework is administered by the department to which the PhD student is affiliated. Furthermore, the departments may – within their own budgetary limits – offer enrolled PhD students additional support, such as office facilities and supplies, administrative support, travel funding and similar.

For category II PhD students, the Innovation Fund Denmark will cover only expenses related to the following activities: supervision, participation in courses offered by one of the field programmes at the graduate school (exclusive of expenses for materials, meals, transport and similar) as well as assessment and public defence of the PhD dissertation. For categories III and IV, these expenses should be covered by the fee fixed in the funding agreement.

Only the head of graduate school, or the person to whom such authority has been given, can sign binding contracts (including funding agreements) for the enrolment of industrial PhD students.

## 6. Employment and enrolment terms

### 6.1. Mandatory attendance

Aarhus University is a campus-based university, and as a general rule, PhD students are required to attend the department with which they are affiliated in person. This means that it is not possible to take a PhD degree at the graduate school by way of distance learning.

### **6.2. Part-time enrolment**

The PhD degree programme is a full-time degree programme, cf. the PhD Order. Applications for part-time enrolment or transfer from a full-time programme into a part-time programme will therefore be met only if very special circumstances apply. Part-time enrolment and/or employment of less than 50 per cent will not be allowed.

If a PhD student wishes to request to switch to part-time for a period, a written, justified application must be submitted to the head of graduate school as described in section 6.6. It will be included in the assessment how long a part-time period is requested and whether it is compatible with the completion of the project within the stipulated time.

### **6.3. Part-time enrolment in connection with external employment**

Part-time enrolment is allowed if arranged in agreement with the head of graduate school, the PhD programme chair and an external partner. PhD students on part-time enrolment must hold external employment in part or in full, and an agreement with the external partner must be drawn up, including details of salary obligations for each of the involved partners, working hours, funding of enrolment and tuition, payment profile, etc.

The terms and conditions stated in these guidelines and the PhD Order shall apply in full for PhD programmes with part-time enrolment. However, deviations from the requirement of change of research environment and teaching experience may be allowed.

### **6.4. Leave of absence**

Pursuant to the collective agreement of the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) and Danish labour law, employed PhD students enrolled in the three-year scheme have the same rights as other employees for taking leave in connection with childbirth, pregnancy, and illness. PhD students enrolled in the four or five-year scheme must, for the first two or three years of study respectively, comply with the rules and regulations set out in the Danish State Education Grant and Loan Scheme (SU) in regard to childbirth, pregnancy and illness. Following the transition to employment as a PhD student for the remaining years of the PhD degree programme, the PhD student will have the same rights as other employees to take leave in connection with childbirth, pregnancy and illness, in accordance with the collective agreement of the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) and Danish labour law.

The PhD degree programme is designed as a coherent three, four or five-year programme. For this reason, other kinds of leave (including part-time leave) are permitted only in special cases. It will be included in the assessment of the request how long a (part-time) period is requested and whether the possible leave is compatible with the completion of the project within the stipulated time.

As a general rule an extension for reasons due to illness may only be granted based on a request submitted after the PhD student has announced a full recovery. A request for extension is submitted as described in section 6.6. As a general rule, an extension may only be granted in case of long-term illness. Extensions due to other kinds of leave are granted when the leave of absence in question is approved. If the PhD student's enrolment ends during a period of sick leave, including part time sick leave, the PhD student can, upon full recovery, request a re-enrolment. In such a case, the assessment of the request will depend on a concrete assessment of whether there is a reasonable expectation that the PhD student will be able to complete the project satisfactorily.

PhD students who wish to interrupt their PhD studies for a shorter or longer period of time must submit a motivated application in writing to the head of graduate school as described in section 6.6.

### 6.5. *Sideline employment*

As a general rule, all employees at Aarhus University may engage in sideline employment, provided that such employment is compatible with their main occupation at Aarhus University, see section 17 of the Danish Civil Servants Act (*Tjenestemandsløven*) and section 15 of the Danish Salaried Employees Act (*Funktionærloven*). For example, sideline employment includes employment with another independent enterprise (including the employee's own company), board memberships in other companies, honorary offices, etc., undertaken concurrently with full-time employment at Aarhus University.

PhD students who wish to engage in sideline employment should ensure that the sideline employment is not of a scope or nature that is incompatible with their main occupation at Aarhus University (their PhD studies). Please refer to Aarhus University's website on sideline employment for further information: <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/en/administration/hr/recruitment-and-employment/sidelineemployment>.

### 6.6. *Application for changes*

Applications for part-time enrolment, leave of absence and sideline employment must be motivated, submitted in writing and must include a statement prepared by the principal supervisor and PhD programme chair. Applications must be submitted to the head of graduate school through Aarhus BSS HR & PhD. The head of graduate school will then decide whether part-time enrolment, leave of absence or permission for sideline employment may be granted.

### 6.7. *Staff Development Dialogue (SDD)*

Annual Staff Development Dialogues (SDD/MUS) with PhD students who have AU as their primary workplace are mandatory and should therefore be held from the first year of the PhD student's employment regardless of which PhD degree programme the PhD student is a part of. An SDD is a mutual development dialogue which focuses on the future. It is not a replacement for an ongoing dialogue and feedback between manager/supervisor(s) and PhD student. The SDD manager is usually the PhD programme chair<sup>2</sup>. Please contact the PhD programme chair for questions regarding SDD.

Link to the SDD dialogue guide for PhD students and Managers can be found here:

[https://medarbejdere.au.dk/fileadmin/www.medarbejdere.au.dk/hovedomraader/Business\\_and\\_Social\\_Sciences/HR\\_paa\\_BS/PhD/PHD\\_mus\\_guide\\_engelsk.pdf](https://medarbejdere.au.dk/fileadmin/www.medarbejdere.au.dk/hovedomraader/Business_and_Social_Sciences/HR_paa_BS/PhD/PHD_mus_guide_engelsk.pdf)

Link to AUs website on SDD:

<https://medarbejdere.au.dk/en/administration/hr/competency-development/staff-development-dialogue-sdd/for-employees>

## 7. *Content of the PhD degree programme*

A research and degree programme plan (the PhD plan) must be developed for each PhD student, cf. the PhD Order. The plan must be approved for the first time no later than three months after the commencement of the PhD degree programme. The sections below and section 8. describe the content requirements for the PhD plan.

### 7.1. *PhD courses*

PhD courses are advanced courses above the level of Master's degree courses. Such courses are subject to quality assurance by the graduate school and must meet the requirements of research training at the highest international level. The course catalogue will be available on the website of each field programme.

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<sup>2</sup> Who the SDD manager is on SOCSIBUS depends on where the PhD student is employed.

Courses for the course plan are selected by the PhD student and his/her supervisors. The principal supervisor must approve all courses and must ensure that these meet the requirements stated in the PhD Order. Furthermore, the principal supervisor must ensure that the selected courses represent sufficient academic breadth and depth, are of relevance to the PhD degree programme and are of suitable academic level.

A PhD plan must contain courses equivalent to 30 ECTS credits. Furthermore, the plan should make it evident that the PhD student will acquire skills in teaching and didactics through course activities or similar during his/her PhD studies. A minimum of 15 of the 30 ECTS credits must be selected among the courses that are offered by the graduate school. Completion of PhD courses corresponding to 15 ECTS credits, which may be completed outside the course programme offered at the graduate school, must be arranged between the PhD student and his/her principal supervisor and must be pre-approved by the graduate school. However, special rules apply to the programme Social Sciences and Business (see the programme website).

Courses in dissemination of knowledge and supervision are not defined as PhD courses according to the PhD Order and therefore cannot constitute part of the total 30 ECTS credits of PhD courses which each PhD student must complete. Similarly, courses in basic skills are not defined as PhD courses according to the PhD Order and therefore cannot constitute part of the total 30 ECTS credits.

The PhD student may – in agreement with the principal supervisor – take other PhD courses in addition to the required standard 30 ECTS credits.

### **7.2. Change of research environment – stays abroad**

The principal supervisor must ensure that a long-term stay abroad forms part of the student's PhD degree programme. Such stays should be spent at an internationally renowned research institution of high standing, preferably outside of Denmark. In accordance with the general guidelines, the graduate school will provide the resources for such research stays for employed PhD students (i.e. students holding fellowships provided by the graduate school). It must be stated in the PhD student's PhD plan evaluation whether a stay at another research institution has been approved.

The stay abroad or the alternative arrangement must be stated in the PhD plan (cf. section 8.2. below). As soon as an agreement has been made on such a stay, the arrangement must be approved by the head of graduate school. In general, the duration of a stay abroad should be 3-12 months. The optimal length of a stay abroad is approximately 6 months. The planning of the stay in regard to location and duration should take into consideration the nature of the research stay, just as the individual PhD student's situation should be considered, including his/her family situation. According to the Statement of Terms and Conditions Act (Act no. 501 Lov om ansættelsesbeviser og visse arbejdsvilkår) clause 4.1 employed PhD students must have an addendum to their enrolment and employment letter as soon as they go abroad for four or more consecutive weeks. For BSS HR & PhD to draw up the addendum, the PhD student must complete the "form regarding a change of environment abroad with a duration of four weeks or more". This form can be found on the "Forms and templates" page under "Change of research environment abroad". The form must be submitted no later than one week before the stay abroad starts.

Under special circumstances, the student may be granted permission to an alternative to a prolonged change of study environment/research stay abroad. Applications for an alternative to a change of research stay abroad must include a description of the reason for the application as well as a description of how the alternative solution meets the requirement for a change of research stay as stipulated in the PhD Order. In such cases, the alternative must be approved by the head of graduate school on the basis of a recommendation by the principal supervisor and the PhD programme chair.

For PhD students enrolled in an industrial PhD programme, a business partnership programme or a self-funded programme, the head of graduate school can make an alternative arrangement in collaboration with the PhD programme chair and the external partner on the basis of a request from the principal supervisor and the PhD student. However, the general approach of the graduate school is that completion of a stay at another research institution (preferably outside of Denmark) is desirable to ensure the quality and degree of internationalisation of the PhD training, also for students enrolled in one of these programmes.

### **7.3. Teaching experience and knowledge dissemination**

PhD students must gain experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination, cf. the PhD Order. To meet the requirements of the graduate school in terms of teaching and knowledge dissemination, each enrolled PhD student must undertake at least one independent teaching activity related to the PhD project in method and/or topic. This general requirement applies to all PhD students, including students who do not hold a fellowship provided by Aarhus BSS. Each student's individual PhD plan must state how and when such experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination will be obtained. PhD students holding fellowships (in part or in full) provided by an external institution should also aim to complete teaching activities.

As part of their employment, employed PhD students must undertake duties of 840 hours (corresponding to ½ full time equivalent), cf. the collective agreement of the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) in force at any time, currently section 7. In addition to the independent teaching activity, PhD students must therefore also undertake instructional tasks or similar up to a reasonable level and for no more than 840 hours in total. The head of graduate school may allow that such experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination is gained in alternative ways if recommended by the PhD programme chair. A PhD student enrolled in an industrial PhD programme, a business partnership programme or a self-funded programme may fulfil (in part or in full) the standard requirement of gaining experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination by undertaking similar duties for the external partner. Such an agreement must be arranged in cooperation between the external partner, PhD programme chair and head of graduate school.

The head of graduate school must ensure that PhD students are provided opportunities to gain sufficient experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination. The head of graduate school must attend to this matter through the relevant PhD programme chair, who must maintain regular contact with the director of studies and the head of department. Courses on knowledge dissemination and supervision to support teaching activities will be offered to PhD students enrolled at the graduate school. The head of graduate school must give approval to any deviations from the standard requirement stipulating that all PhD students must undertake the above stated teaching obligations of up to 840 hours.

### **7.4. Project presentations**

Each field committee sets the rules for project presentations. Such rules must incorporate the following minimum requirements: The PhD student must on a regular basis – and at least twice during the PhD degree programme – present the PhD project and obtained research results in a forum to senior researchers under the guidance of the principal supervisor and summoned by the PhD programme chair. As a general rule, the first presentation should take place no later than one year after enrolment. If the provisions laid down by the given field committee call for it, other PhD students and (internal or external) members of academic staff may also be invited to participate in such presentations.

The set of rules adopted by each field committee on project presentations (requirements for PhD students and participants) must be approved by the head of graduate school and must be made available on the graduate school website.



### **7.5. Participation in workshops and conferences**

As part of their PhD programme, PhD students must participate in relevant international workshops and conferences. All PhD students must present at least one contribution at an international conference. The principal supervisors and the PhD programme chairs must ensure that the relevant opportunities are provided for the students. The PhD student is only awarded ECTS credits for conferences and workshops if he/she contributes to the presentation.

### **7.6. Particulars on enrolment prior to completion of Master's degree programme**

#### **Four-year scheme**

In the four-year scheme, enrolled PhD students must complete the Master's degree during the first two years of the PhD degree programme (i.e. students are jointly enrolled in both the Master's and the PhD degree programme). This part of the programme is referred to as Part A/4+4. The last two years of the PhD degree programme, referred to as Part B/4+4, correspond to the last two years of the regular three-year PhD degree programme. The field committee must, in agreement with the relevant board of studies, lay down the rules for the Master's degree component of the four-year scheme. Such rules must be made publicly available on the graduate school website and must be defined within the general framework below.

When the PhD student is enrolled, he/she has completed 60 ECTS credits of the Master's degree programme. The remaining 60 ECTS credits must be completed over the course of two years in the following way:

- *Regular courses available through the relevant Master's degree programme (or PhD courses eligible for credit transfer into this Master's degree programme): 20 ECTS credits*
- *Other activity (regular courses, credit transferred PhD courses, seminar/workshop or similar): 10 ECTS credits*
- *Substitution of Master's thesis (may consist of several – but no more than three – examination activities and forms): 30 ECTS credits*

If in exceptional cases, the graduate school accepts enrolment on a basis of more than 60 ECTS credits on the Master's degree programme, the Master's degree programme on part A will be shortened accordingly. One month of credit transfer is given per 5 extra ECTS credits.

The field committee must ensure that any deviations from the general rules applying to these activities are approved by the head of graduate school and thereafter by the board of studies for the Master's degree programme in question.

Under the Part A/4+4 scheme, the PhD student must also complete PhD activities corresponding to approximately one third of the total activities during their PhD degree programme. In addition to the work on the PhD dissertation, such activities may be completion of PhD courses and gaining experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination.

After completion of Part A/4+4, the PhD student will be enrolled in Part B/4+4 as a full-time PhD student and employed as a paid PhD fellow. Admission to Part B/4+4 is conditional upon a satisfactory result on the final examination in combination with positive PhD plan evaluations. PhD students must complete their Master's degree programme in the 24th month of the Part A/4+4 scheme.

#### **Five-year scheme**

In the five-year scheme, PhD students are enrolled immediately after completion of the Bachelor's degree programme. The field committee must, in agreement with the relevant board of studies, lay down rules for the Master's degree component of the five-year scheme. Such rules must be made publicly available on the graduate school website and must be defined within the general framework below.

As a general rule, the PhD student must complete 120 ECTS credits in order to achieve the Master's degree. The required course work must be completed over the course of three years in the following way:

- *Regular courses available through – or transferred to – the relevant Master's degree programme: 60 ECTS credits*
- *PhD courses transferred to the Master's degree programme: 20 ECTS credits*
- *Other activity (regular courses, credit transferred PhD courses, seminar/workshop or similar): 10 ECTS credits*
- *Substitution of Master's thesis (may consist of several – but no more than three – examination activities and methods): 30 ECTS credits*

The field committee must ensure that any deviations from the general rules applying to these activities are approved by the head of graduate school and thereafter by the board of studies for the Master's degree programme in question.

After completion of Part A/3+5, the PhD student will be enrolled in Part B/3+5 as a full-time PhD student and employed as a paid PhD fellow. Admission to Part B/3+5 is conditional upon a satisfactory result on the final examination in combination with positive PhD plan evaluations. PhD students must complete their Master's degree programme in the 36th month of the Part A/3+5 scheme.

### **7.7. Project descriptions (including preliminary project descriptions)**

The underlying basis of the PhD project is the project description, which has been approved at the time of enrolment. The project description must be revised in cooperation with the supervisors and must be re-approved by the head of graduate school on recommendation by the PhD programme chair in connection with the first PhD plan evaluation. The project description must be revised on a regular basis, at least in connection with each PhD plan evaluation. The revised project description must demonstrate how the PhD student, within the standard time limit, can complete the PhD project and submit a PhD dissertation on the proposed topic at the end of the enrolment period. Please refer to the remarks below under section 8.2. regarding PhD plans.

In connection with the four and five-year scheme, the underlying basis of the PhD project is the preliminary project description (cf. sections 4.2.2. and 4.2.3. above). The preliminary project description must be further developed into an actual project description in cooperation with the supervisors, which can be approved just after the second biannual progress report (four-year scheme) or after the fourth biannual progress report (five-year scheme) by the head of graduate school on recommendation by the PhD programme chair. Hereafter, the project description must be revised on a regular basis, cf. above.

## **8. The PhD plan**

### **8.1. Regular update of PhD plan**

The individual PhD plan is the most important document for the PhD degree programme. The PhD plan must state the details of the agreements that have been made during the course of studies. Because the document serves as evidence of the student's progress throughout the programme, a PhD plan must be drawn up no later than three months after enrolment, and the plan must include at least the items listed under section 8.2. below.

The plan must be approved by the principal supervisor and the PhD student. The head of graduate school must then approve the plan on the basis of the recommendation by the PhD programme chair. The principal supervisor must ensure that the PhD plan is revised on a regular basis, at minimum in connection with each PhD plan evaluation.

Based on a recommendation by the PhD programme chair, the head of graduate school may accept that one or several of the standard study components are omitted, if the PhD student has completed equivalent activities elsewhere, which qualify for credit transfer.

The PhD plan must be updated on a regular basis in cooperation between the PhD student and the supervisors. As a minimum, the plan must be revised in connection with each PhD plan evaluation. Modifications to the PhD plan should be expected and are a natural consequence of successful academic supervision. With their approval of the PhD plan evaluations, the PhD student and the principal supervisor agree on and confirm that the current version of the PhD plan is approved by both parties. Following the recommendation of the PhD programme chair, the head of graduate school approves the current PhD plan in connection with the PhD plan evaluations.

## 8.2. Content of PhD plan

*Time schedule:* The project time schedule must be realistic and must be revised accordingly on a regular basis.

*An agreement on the form of supervision:* The PhD plan must include a description of mutual demands and expectations to the supervision process, including details of method and frequency of supervision sessions. Alterations to the already agreed supervision process must be stated in the PhD plan. With their approval of the PhD plan evaluations, the principal supervisor and the PhD student confirm that the supervision process has been satisfactory.

*Description of PhD project:* The PhD plan must include an updated project description, including a plan for the progress of the project (cf. section 7.7.).

*Form of dissertation:* The PhD plan must include an updated description of the form of the PhD dissertation (cf. section 11.1.).

*PhD courses:* The PhD plan must (cf. section 7.1.) include an updated description of the PhD courses (internal courses offered at the graduate school or external courses), which the PhD student intends to take. Registration for relevant courses which do not form part of the mandatory courses at the graduate school requires prior approval by the supervisor, and participation in such courses must be substantiated and entered into the PhD plan. Pre-approvals and final approvals of external courses must also be stated in the plan. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that pre-approvals and final approvals are obtained in time.

*Stay at other research institution:* The PhD plan must (cf. section 7.2.) include an updated plan (description and time schedule) for a research stay abroad. The PhD plan must also include a motivation for choice of research institution. If a long-term research stay abroad is not possible or desirable, the PhD plan must include an explanation for this and a recommendation outlining alternative ways in which the requirements of the PhD Order on change of research environment can be met. Please note that an exemption from standard requirements may only be granted on the basis of an application, cf. section 7.2.

*Teaching and knowledge dissemination:* The PhD plan must (cf. section 7.3.) include an updated statement as to how the required experience with teaching and knowledge dissemination will be achieved in accordance with the PhD Order. The PhD plan must state at least the type of activities and the time for completion of such activities. Any other prearranged knowledge dissemination activities should also be listed.

*Budget:* The PhD plan must include a budget in order to ensure agreement on the financial framework of the PhD degree programme.

*Intellectual property rights:* If the PhD degree programme is carried out in collaboration with external partners, the PhD plan must include a written agreement on intellectual property rights. Binding contracts on intellectual property rights require prior approval by the head of graduate school.

*List of activities:* The PhD plan must include an updated overview, divided into semesters, of all main activities during the PhD degree programme in the form of: a detailed description of ongoing or completed activities, i.e. courses, teaching and knowledge dissemination, research stay abroad and publications such as project descriptions, working papers, scientific papers, etc., and a comprehensive description of the next semester's activities within these four areas as well as a more tentative description of the activities within these four areas in the following semesters.

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## **9. Evaluation of the PhD plan**

### **9.1. Regular plan evaluation**

The head of graduate school must regularly evaluate whether the PhD student follows his/her plan and, if necessary, adjust the plan. This assessment is based on an opinion from the principal supervisor, who, after having consulted the PhD student, confirms that the PhD degree programme is progressing in accordance with the PhD plan or justifies (in writing) why adjustments are required. This assessment takes place partly in the form of plan evaluations, partly in the form of an annual assessment by the board of supervisors (cf. section 9.4. ). The assessment must take into consideration periods of inactivity owing to documented illness, parental leave, or other approved leave.

Plan evaluations take place via the platform MyPhD three times during the PhD education (four times for 4+4 PhD students), according to the PhD students individual time schedule for plan evaluations. Figure 3 visualizes when plan evaluations are expected to take place in relation to the enrolment end date. If the enrolment end date changes, e.g., as a result of various forms of leave, the individual schedule for carrying out plan evaluations is changed accordingly. The PhD student's deadline for plan evaluation should not be in June, July or December, but in the following month.

The plan evaluations must be completed and approved by the head of graduate school no later than two months after the PhD student's deadline for submission of the plan evaluation. The head of graduate school must base his/her approval on the recommendation by the PhD programme chair. If the PhD student goes on maternity/paternity leave or full-time sick leave, the plan is put on hold until the PhD programme is resumed on a full or part-time basis.

The head of graduate school must ensure that the PhD student and his/her principal supervisor are duly reminded of the forthcoming plan evaluation. The PhD programme chair must then make sure that the progress report is completed. The PhD student must prepare a proposal for a revised PhD plan and discuss this with the principal supervisor. Changes to the PhD plan must be described and justified. Furthermore, plan elements must be updated and enriched with any necessary documents, e.g. pre- or final approvals of external courses, course diplomas etc. On the basis of the revised PhD plan and the discussions with the PhD student, the principal supervisor must complete and forward the PhD plan evaluation to the head of graduate school through the PhD programme chair according to the workflow described on the MyPhD website.

The PhD student must be allowed at least two weeks to comment on the plan evaluation drawn up by the principal supervisor. The PhD student confirms his/her approval of the content of the plan evaluation and any adjustments made since the most recently approved PhD plan.

The principal supervisor must ensure that the plan evaluation is completed by the deadline. In case of repeated delays, the dean may deprive the supervisor of the right to serve as a supervisor to PhD students. If the head of graduate school can accept the plan evaluation, the report will be registered as approved. If the head of graduate school cannot accept the plan evaluation, the report will be returned to the principal supervisor together with a statement accounting for the reasons for rejection and a deadline for submission of a revised report.

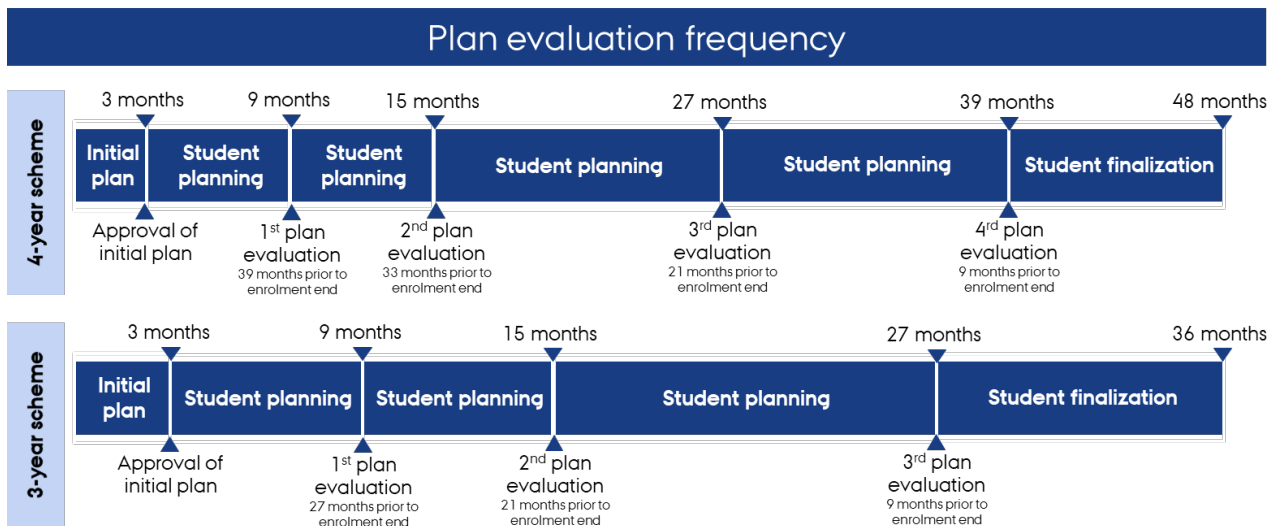


Figure 3. Expected placement of plan evaluations in the three-year and four-year scheme, respectively.

### 9.2. Extraordinary plan evaluation

If, in the periods between plan evaluations, it is assessed that the PhD student does not follow the PhD plan or there for other reasons is enough reason to raise concerns regarding timely completion of the PhD study, an extraordinary plan evaluation can be initiated. An extraordinary plan evaluation can only be initiated if both the principal supervisor and PhD programme chair agree.

A request for initiation of an extraordinary plan evaluation can be submitted by the PhD student, the principal supervisor, or the PhD programme chair. The request must be sent to the graduate school (Aarhus BSS HR & PhD) via the PhD programme chair. The request must be justified, and there must have been a dialogue between the PhD student, the supervisor, and the PhD programme chair in advance.

An extraordinary plan evaluation is carried out on the platform MyPhD with a deadline for the student of 14 days. The usual plan evaluation workflow is followed.

### 9.3. Negative assessment of progress

If the evaluation finds that the PhD student is not progressing in accordance with the PhD plan despite former modifications, the principal supervisor must, in collaboration with the co-supervisor, make a statement accounting for the required adjustments, and such statement must be forwarded (through the PhD programme chair) via Aarhus BSS HR & PhD to the head of graduate school together with a proposal for a revised PhD plan, if such revision is needed. The head of graduate school must then allow the PhD student three months (trial period) to remedy any deficiencies in accordance with the specific recommendations provided by the supervisors, cf. the general provisions in the PhD Order. If the PhD student rejects the offer of a trial period to remedy deficiencies in accordance with the supervisors' recommendations, enrolment (and employment, if applicable) will terminate at the end of the month in which the offer is made.

The three months trial period do not give rise to an extension of the PhD degree programme. A PhD student can only be allowed to remedy once.

After the trial period, the principal supervisor and the co-supervisor must carry out a new assessment as soon as possible. If the new assessment is positive, enrolment will continue without any changes. If the new assessment is negative, enrolment will terminate, cf. the PhD Order. The head of graduate school must promptly inform any partner institutions of termination of enrolment.

If the PhD student cannot accept the content of an assessment and/or modifications to the PhD plan, the PhD student must refrain from approving the plan evaluation and instead submit a statement to the head of graduate school. The head of graduate school must then collect statements from the supervisors and the PhD programme chair and, on this basis, make a decision on the assessment and/or modifications to the PhD plan.

#### **9.4. Annual assessment by board of supervisors**

All enrolled PhD students at the graduate school must go through an assessment process conducted by the board of supervisors serving for the field programme in question every year. The main purpose of this annual assessment is to discuss the progress of each individual PhD student. Each field committee must set up their own rules for completion of such annual assessments within the framework stated below.

The board of supervisors consists of:

1. The PhD student's supervisors
2. Representatives – appointed by the PhD programme chair in question – for all principal supervisors and co-supervisors who are responsible for active PhD students in the field programme working with associated topics
3. Representatives from the PhD field committee

The assessment may take place over the course of one or several meetings. The PhD student may present his/her PhD plan and preliminary manuscripts (if any) at this annual meeting in order to obtain feedback and suggestions for the PhD project from the board of supervisors.

After the annual meeting, each PhD programme chair must forward a brief report on each PhD student enrolled in the field programme to the head of graduate school.

## **10. Supervision**

### **10.1. Approval of supervisors**

In general, all academic staff members holding permanent tenure at the rank of full or associate professor at one of the departments may act as principal supervisors to PhD students enrolled in their academic field. However, all supervisors must complete the training course for supervisors, which is offered at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, in order to increase the quality of the supervision. The content of this training course is approved by the dean, and courses are offered in Danish and English.

In special cases, academic staff members who do not hold tenure at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, may qualify to serve as co-supervisors at the graduate school. The head of graduate school must approve such arrangements on the basis of a recommendation by the PhD programme chair.

## **10.2. Allocation of supervisors**

The head of graduate school must allocate supervisors to all PhD students on the basis of a recommendation drawn up by the PhD programme chair and the formal approval of such recommendation by the head of department. To ensure the best possible supervision process, each enrolled PhD student at the graduate school will be allocated two supervisors: a principal supervisor and a co-supervisor. The principal supervisor must be a recognised researcher within the academic field in question, must be an academic staff member at the rank of associate or full professor at Aarhus University, and must be affiliated with the graduate school. Co-supervisors may be at the rank of assistant professor. An additional co-supervisor may be appointed, possibly from another research institution, if deemed appropriate. If the PhD student is employed in a company as part of the PhD project, the co-supervisor must be affiliated with the external partner where the PhD student is employed.

## **10.3. Roles and responsibilities of supervisors**

The principal supervisor has the overall academic responsibility for the PhD programme in its entirety towards the graduate school and the PhD student, including the responsibility for ensuring that the planned course activities correspond to at least 30 ECTS credits and that the PhD student obtains pre-approvals and final approvals of external courses. The co-supervisor must provide supervision in the academic field to the PhD student.

The exact distribution of supervision duties between the supervisors must be arranged in each specific case and stated in writing in the supervision agreement as part of the PhD plan. The principal supervisor must offer thorough supervision to the PhD student on the dissertation as well as on other components of the PhD degree programme, including course participation, stay abroad and teaching duties undertaken by the PhD student.

The supervisors must pay particular attention to the PhD student's need for advice, interest, and encouragement in regard to teaching duties. For instance, the supervisors must ensure that the PhD student is offered relevant courses, e.g. training courses on teaching and learning issues, and that these courses form part of the PhD plan.

The principal supervisor is expected to discuss career plans with the PhD student during the PhD degree programme. In addition, the PhD student may make use of the career advisory services for PhD students at Aarhus University.

## **10.4. Change of supervisor**

Regular adjustments to a PhD project, such as change of principal supervisor on academic grounds, may under special circumstances be approved by the head of graduate school on the recommendation of the PhD programme chair.

Change of principal supervisor occurs on the basis of prior agreement between the PhD student, the former supervisors, the new principal supervisor and the head of graduate school. Co-supervisors may be added or changed by agreement with the PhD programme chair. Following any change of supervisor, the PhD plan should be adjusted accordingly. If agreement cannot be made on the change of supervisor, the head of graduate school will determine the case after consultation with the PhD programme chair and the head of department.

# **11. Advancing to PhD candidacy**

## **11.1. PhD dissertation**

The PhD dissertation should document the author's ability to apply relevant scholarly methodology and to carry out research work that meets the international standards for PhD degrees within the field in question.

The PhD dissertation may take the following forms:

1. a monograph

2. a collection of scientific articles including a summary (in Danish sammenfatning or kappe) accounting for the relation between the publications and how they contribute to the overall PhD project.

If the PhD dissertation consists of a collection of articles, the principal supervisor must ensure that the PhD student prepares a summary of these articles before submitting the dissertation. The summary must (possibly briefly) account for the relation between the publications and how they contribute to the overall PhD project. This summary is not the same as the abstract mentioned below.

The monograph as well as the collection of scientific articles must include research contributions, which have been published in or are potentially publishable through recognised publishing channels. For both types of PhD dissertation, the number of pages depends on the nature and quality of the content. The monograph is typically 150-300 pages, while a collection of scientific articles generally will consist of 3-6 papers.

Part of the dissertation may be written in collaboration with others, e.g. supervisors, but must include entirely independent substantial scientific contributions. If the dissertation contains co-authored papers or chapters, the dissertation must include co-authorship statements identifying the PhD student's share of the work. These must be included as the last pages of the dissertation and be indexed.

The dissertation must be written in Danish or English, and a brief abstract in Danish and English must be enclosed. The head of graduate school may permit submission of a PhD dissertation written, in part or in whole, in another language than Danish or English. Application for submission of a dissertation in another language must be forwarded to the head of graduate school and must be signed by the principal supervisor and the PhD programme chair.

### **11.2. Timely submission of dissertation**

To have submitted on time, the PhD student must submit the dissertation no later than the last day of the enrolment period at 23:59 CET. The student must submit the dissertation by sending an email with the dissertation attached in PDF to the PhD secretary or to Aarhus BSS HR & PhD: [bphd@psys.au.dk](mailto:bphd@psys.au.dk).

### **11.3. Approval of PhD degree programme**

On the basis of the latest PhD plan, the PhD student must, at the end of the enrolment period, draw up a final list of all activities which have formed part of the entire PhD degree programme. This is done by closing the PhD plan no later than a month before the enrolment period ends or the dissertation is submitted.

The principal supervisor must then make a final statement on the PhD degree programme in its entirety, including details on the completion of the individual components listed in the PhD plan. The dissertation can only be assessed if the entire PhD degree programme has been completed satisfactorily.

If the principal supervisor states that the PhD degree programme is not completed satisfactorily, the PhD student must be given at least two weeks to comment on the principal supervisor's assessment.

On the basis of the principal supervisor's statement, the PhD student's comments (if any) and the regular plan evaluations, the head of graduate school will determine whether the PhD degree programme has been completed satisfactorily.

### **11.4. Submission of PhD dissertation without prior enrolment**

In accordance with the PhD Order section 15(2), the graduate school may accept a PhD dissertation for assessment without prior enrolment if special circumstances apply. If so, the author must be found to have acquired qualifications



comparable to those obtained during a PhD degree programme at the graduate school in an alternative way. The procedure for submitting a dissertation for assessment under section 15(2) can be found on the graduate school website under Rules and regulations.

### **11.5. Termination of enrolment**

A PhD student's enrolment and employment (if any) will terminate without further notice at the end of the fixed enrolment/employment period (subject to adjustments in connection with granted leave).

In addition, enrolment/employment may be terminated in the following cases:

- If the PhD student wishes to resign or terminates the enrolment and/or employment
- If the conditions for continued enrolment/employment are no longer available (cf. section 9.2.)
- Submission of the dissertation.

## **12. Assessment and defence of PhD dissertation**

### **12.1. Appointment of assessment committee**

No later than at the submission of a PhD dissertation, the dean must appoint an assessment committee consisting of three members on the basis of a recommendation from the field committee.

Assessment committee members must be recognised researchers in the relevant field of study and must be at the associate professor level or above. Two of the members must be from external institutions of which at least one must be from outside Denmark, unless this is found undesirable from an academic point of view. For industrial PhD programmes, at least one committee member must have relevant business-related research experience within the field in question. The principal supervisor sits on the assessment committee without voting rights.

Immediately after appointment of the assessment committee, the head of graduate school must notify the candidate (author of the dissertation) of the appointment. The candidate must then be allowed one week to present objections to the composition of the assessment committee.

There must be no conflict of interest between the members of the assessment committee and the PhD student and PhD dissertation, cf. the rules on conflict of interest in the Danish Public Administration Act. Thus, the members are not allowed to have:

- a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the PhD defence
- prepared, submitted or published research findings with the PhD student.

A personal interest in the outcome of the defence can refer to instances where the committee member has already assessed significant parts of the PhD student's later stage work in a formalised way, as might be the case for third year presentations. More informal feedback at earlier stages and on smaller parts of the PhD dissertation, e.g. through research group seminars or informal individual meetings, will normally not be considered a conflict of interest.

### **12.2. Role of assessment committee**

Members and delegates of the assessment committee have a duty to keep information confidential. The principal supervisor sits on the assessment committee without voting rights. This means that the chair of the committee must ensure that the principal supervisor is involved in the committees' work. How this is done in practice may differ depending on the

case. It is the chair's responsibility to clarify this with the principal supervisor, and it is understood that the principal supervisor participates to such an extent as circumstances may require. The principal supervisor should be invited to participate in committee meetings. If the committee's activity is conducted in writing, it must be done in a way that ensures that the principal supervisor has reasonable insight into the members of the committee's points of view. The committee's draft for a written assessment must be presented to the principal supervisor well in advance of the deadline for submitting the assessment and before it is sent to the head of graduate school.

The assessment committee must carry out an impartial and well-founded assessment of the submitted PhD dissertation. Upon receiving the PhD dissertation, the assessment committee will also receive a set of guidelines concerning the form and content of the assessment. The committee must draw up a recommendation for the Academic Council, which must be forwarded to the dean through the head of graduate school. The recommendation must state whether the dissertation, in the present version and in combination with a successful public defence, is found to comply with the quality requirements laid down in the PhD Order.

The recommendation must include an explanation of the reasons for the assessment, and in the event of a difference of opinion, the majority will prevail. The recommendation must be suitable for forming the basis for decision in the Academic Council on award of the PhD degree in accordance with the PhD Order and the Danish Public Administration Act.

Please refer to the 'Guidelines for assessment committees on award of the PhD degree' for further details on the specific requirements to the recommendation.

### **12.3. Preliminary assessment and pre-defence**

No later than two months after submission of the dissertation, the assessment committee must forward a preliminary reasoned recommendation to the head of graduate school including one of the following conclusions:

1. In accordance with the Ministerial Order section 18(2), the dissertation is found suitable for public defence in the submitted version. The recommendation must include a defence date and a suggestion for a topic for the public defence.
2. In accordance with the Ministerial Order section 18(2), the dissertation is found suitable for public defence in the submitted form, but the assessment committee recommends certain improvements, which are assessed as feasible to implement before the specified defence date. The recommendation must include a specification of the recommended improvements, a defence date and a suggestion for a topic for the public defence.
3. In accordance with the Ministerial Order section 18(3) and 18(4), no. 2, the dissertation is not found suitable for public defence in the submitted version, but the assessment committee finds that the dissertation may be accepted for public defence after revision. The recommendation must include a deadline for submission of the revised dissertation as well as a specification of the necessary and recommended improvements. The author and the principal supervisor should be given the opportunity to submit their comments on the recommendation within a period of at least two weeks.
4. In accordance with the Ministerial Order section 18(3) and 18(4), no. 1, the dissertation is not found suitable for public defence in the submitted version, and revision within a reasonable period of time is not considered possible. The author and the principal supervisor should be given the opportunity to submit their comments on the recommendation within a period of at least two weeks.

The graduate school must send a copy of the recommendation to the candidate as soon as possible.

If the preliminary assessment concludes that the dissertation is not found suitable for public defence, the head of graduate school must, on the basis of the recommendation submitted by the assessment committee and the candidate's and the principal supervisor's comments (if any), make one of the following decisions:

- That the public defence cannot be held.
- That the PhD dissertation may be resubmitted in a revised version within a period of three months at minimum. If the PhD dissertation is resubmitted, it will be assessed by the original assessment committee, unless special circumstances apply.
- That the PhD dissertation will be referred to a different assessment committee for assessment.

The assessment committee's preliminary recommendation can be based on a so-called pre-defence, where the PhD student is summoned for a meeting. The meeting must be organised by the chair of the assessment committee and must be completed early enough to ensure that the preliminary recommendation will be available no later than two months after submission of the PhD dissertation.

The PhD student, the supervisors and the members of the assessment committee must all participate in the pre-defence. In exceptional cases, one of the committee members may be absent. In such cases, the chair of the assessment committee must ensure that the views of the absent member are presented. If technically possible, the pre-defence may also take place as a video conference.

The discussion at the pre-defence must be based on an outline of the committee's preliminary recommendation, which must be forwarded to the PhD student and the principal supervisor no later than 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of the pre-defence. The discussion must address all significant parts of the dissertation which should be improved according to the assessment committee.

#### **12.4. Publication of dissertation before the defence**

Under section 19(2) of the PhD Order, the university must ensure that the dissertation is made available to those interested well in advance of the defence. The final manuscript must therefore either be uploaded electronically to the research registration platform Pure as open access before the defence and/or or be submitted ready for printing to the printing facilities used by the department in question. In case of a request to upload the dissertation as open access, the dissertation should be uploaded to Pure no later than **two weeks before the defence** (please remember to inform the PhD secretary who is in charge of the defence). In connection with printing, the finished manuscript should be submitted to the printing facilities within the given deadline, so that the printed dissertation may be available at the department within a reasonable time of the defence.

Do not forget to take into account possible limitations issued by publishers of journals, periodicals and publishing houses in case of double publication – also subsequently.

#### **12.5. Submission of revised PhD dissertation – resubmission**

A revised PhD dissertation must be submitted before the deadline for resubmission, which has been set by the head of graduate school. Unless otherwise stated in the preliminary recommendation by the assessment committee, resubmission of the dissertation must include a summary of the revisions made in accordance with the comments in the preliminary assessment as well as a description of how the revised dissertation complies with any further requirements (if any) from the assessment committee. A copy of the revised PhD dissertation including comments on the revisions must be forwarded to all members of the assessment committee through the head of graduate school.

The assessment committee will then make an assessment of the revised PhD dissertation and will determine whether the revised dissertation can be accepted for public defence. If positive, the assessment committee must forward the final assessment to the dean, through the head of graduate school, together with a suggestion for a topic for the public defence. If negative, the assessment committee must inform the dean, through the head of graduate school, that the revised dissertation cannot be accepted for public defence. The head of graduate school must send a copy of the new assessment to the candidate as soon as possible.

### **12.6. Date of defence**

The assessment committee must propose a preliminary date for the public defence.

The defence must take place no earlier than two weeks after the assessment committee has released the preliminary assessment, but no later than three months after submission of the PhD dissertation, unless special circumstances apply. If the preliminary assessment concludes that the PhD dissertation must be improved, a new date for the public defence must be set on the basis of the deadline for submission of the revised dissertation, which is determined by the head of graduate school at the recommendation of the assessment committee. The public defence must take place immediately after the deadline expires.

### **12.7. Public defence**

The public defence of the PhD dissertation must take place no later than three months after submission of the dissertation, unless special circumstances apply. The defence is chaired by the PhD programme chair or a representative for the chair.

The public defence must be conducted as a public lecture of no more than 45 minutes on the topic determined by the assessment committee (in connection with the preliminary assessment of the PhD dissertation). The introductory lecture must be followed by a discussion on the basis of questions presented by the members of the assessment committee, followed by questions from the audience. A public defence should generally last 1.5-2 hours and no more than 3 hours.

The public defence must allow committee members to account for the impact and quality of the dissertation, and for the PhD student to present and defend the dissertation to the members of the assessment committee. In addition, the defence should also invite others to participate in the discussion.

### **12.8. Award of PhD degree**

Immediately following the defence, the assessment committee must decide whether the PhD degree can be awarded and must inform Aarhus University and the author of the PhD dissertation of their decision. The recommendation must include an assessment of the PhD dissertation and of the public defence. The committee's final recommendation must be announced verbally immediately after the defence session and must be available in writing as soon as possible hereafter.

After the defence, the Academic Council has eight days to submit comments. The degree is not awarded until the eight days have expired.

If the recommendation of the assessment committee is negative, the Academic Council may decide to allow the dissertation to be assessed by a new assessment committee, if so requested by the author within a period of at least one week.

The Academic Council awards the degree if two members of the assessment committee recommend that the PhD degree be awarded.

## ***13. Other provisions***

### ***13.1. Complaints and dispensation***

Complaints on issues relating to these rules and regulations must be directed to the dean. The dean may grant an exemption from the rules which have been adopted exclusively at Aarhus BSS, if special circumstances apply. The dean's decisions may be referred to the Danish Agency for Institutions and Educational Grants if the complaint concerns legal issues. Complaints must be submitted within two weeks from the day the decision is notified to the complainant.

An author who has not completed a PhD degree programme is only entitled to make a complaint if his/her PhD dissertation has been accepted for assessment, cf. section 11.3.

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### ***13.2. Commencement and interim provisions***

These regulations shall come into force on 15 November 2023.

Thomas Pallesen  
Dean