



Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies,
October 2009

EXAMINATION OF A DOCTORAL THESIS

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF A DOCTORAL THESIS

Procedure before the preliminary examination

- At the Turku School of Economics a doctoral thesis is always written under the guidance of at least one supervisor. There may also be more than one supervisor and they may be from different subjects. Normally one of the supervisors is the professor of the student's major subject.
- The thesis can be a monograph or a collection of articles or essays. In the latter case, the pieces, which are all related to the same general theme, can be scientific publications, manuscripts approved for publishing or other equivalent work fulfilling the scientific criteria of a doctoral dissertation. They should be preceded by an introductory chapter in which the research problem, its motivation and scientific positioning as well as research aims, methods, results and conclusions regarding the thesis as a whole are presented. The articles/essays may be co-authored, if the candidate's own significant contribution can be shown therein. This needs to be evidenced in a separate statement undersigned by the co-authors.
- After the supervisor has examined that the manuscript meets the requirements set for a doctoral thesis, the doctoral candidate submits an application to the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies asking the Committee to confirm the preliminary examiners of his/her doctoral thesis.
- The Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies appoints at least two preliminary examiners based on the proposal of either the supervising professor or the professor of the student's major subject. The preliminary examiners are nominated from outside the Turku School of Economics. They must have a doctoral degree and one of them must also have decent qualifications at minimum.

Instructions for preliminary examiners of a doctoral thesis

- The preliminary examiners must give a substantiated, written statement (about 1200 – 1600 words) evaluating whether the thesis can be considered to have such scientific value that it meets the requirements set for a doctoral thesis, and that it can be granted a printing permit. The evaluation must contain exemplification of the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript.
- In the event that the preliminary examiner requires changes to be made to the thesis, the matter will not be dealt with in the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies before the changes have been made and the preliminary examiner can recommend in a personal statement that the thesis warrants printing permission. The Committee ultimately grants printing permission on the basis of the preliminary examiners' substantiated and unconditional written statements ('unconditional' meaning that the examiners do not have decisive requirements for revisions before printing permission can be granted).
- The preliminary examiners can provide individual statements or a joint statement. The preliminary examiner's statement should be provided within three months from the receipt of



the manuscript. The signed statement is addressed to The Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies and it is delivered to the following address:

Turku School of Economics
Rehtorinpellonkatu 3
FI-20500 TURKU, FINLAND

PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF A DOCTORAL THESIS

- The Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies appoints the opponent(s) for the public examination based on the proposal of either the supervising professor or the professor of the student's major subject. The Committee also confirms the date for the public examination of the doctoral thesis.
- Supervisor(s) or a person appointed by the supervisor (e.g., an Education and Research Secretary or a Research Associate) take(s) care of the practical arrangements related to the opponent's visit to the Turku School of Economics.
- The correct apparel for the doctoral candidate, the custos (=chairman of the defence) and the opponent(s) is a black dress with long sleeves for ladies, and evening dress for gentlemen. Alternatively, if the doctoral candidate, custos and opponent(s) so agree, dark suits may be worn.

Official procedure at the public examination of a doctoral thesis

1. The doctoral candidate enters the room first, followed by the custos and then the opponent(s) in this order (the audience should stand).
2. The custos and opponent(s) should have their doctor's hat (assuming they have one) in their left hand when entering and leaving the room; during the public examination, the hat is placed on the table with the lyre towards the audience.
3. After all (the opponent(s), the custos and the doctoral candidate as well as the audience) are seated, the custos, standing, opens the proceedings with the following words: "As custos appointed by the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies of the Turku School of Economics I declare that this public examination has begun."
4. The doctoral candidate, standing, then gives his/her lectio praecursoria (introductory lecture), which may not exceed 20 minutes in duration. The lecture begins with the greeting: "Learned custos, my esteemed opponent(s), ladies and gentlemen".
5. The doctoral candidate concludes his lectio praecursoria with the following words: "Professor n.n., I respectfully ask you, as the opponent duly appointed by the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies, to present your comments on my doctoral dissertation."
6. Then the opponent(s), standing, give(s) a short statement concerning the scientific status and significance of the topic of the dissertation, together with other similar comments of a more general nature. After this statement, both the opponent(s) and the doctoral candidate resume their seats.
7. In the examination of the dissertation, the opponent(s) should begin by dealing with general questions, and then proceed to a detailed scrutiny of the text. The examination should cover the research problem, its motivation and scientific positioning, research objectives, theories, methods and data used in the thesis, results and conclusions as well as the scientific contribution of the dissertation. The



correction of misprints is not handled as a part of the proceedings. The doctoral candidate may give his/her opponent(s) a written list of the misprints he/she has found, and this list may be appended to the opponent's statement submitted to the Council for Academic Research and Education.

8. The opponent(s) may not spend more than four hours on the examination of the dissertation, so that enough time remains for other speakers to present questions or comments. If the examination takes a long time, the custos may announce an interval. The total examination may not last longer than six hours. Typically, it takes about 2-3 hours.
9. The opponent(s) conclude(s) his/her examination with a final statement on the thesis, including general remarks on its strengths and weaknesses as well as its contribution to its field. Both the opponent(s) and the doctoral candidate should stand. After the final statement the opponent(s) resume(s) his/her seat.
10. The doctoral candidate, standing, then thanks his/her opponent(s) for the comments and discussion.
11. The doctoral candidate next turns to the audience and says: "I now respectfully invite any members of the audience who wish to offer comments on my dissertation to ask the custos for permission to speak." After this the doctoral candidate resumes his/her seat.
12. The custos then leads the discussion, and is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral candidate is able to reply immediately to each comment offered, and that the discussion is relevant to the topic.
13. Finally the custos, standing, concludes the proceedings in the following words: "The public examination of the doctoral thesis is now concluded." The opponent(s) and the doctoral candidate as well as the audience should be seated.
14. After the public examination, the opponent(s), custos and doctoral candidate leave the room (the audience should follow this procedure while standing).

The Opponent's final written statement

- After the public examination, the opponent(s) appointed by the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies has/have 30 days to deliver a written statement(s) including a substantiated evaluation of the scientific value of the final doctoral thesis and whether it serves its purpose. Also, an evaluation of how the candidate succeeded in defending his/her thesis should be included. If there is more than one opponent, they can give individual statements or a joint statement. On the grounds of these arguments, the opponent(s) proposes a grade for the doctoral thesis. Expectation for the extent of the statement is about 1200 – 1600 words.
- The Council for Academic Research and Education ultimately grants the grade for the doctoral thesis, and this decision is based on the opponent(s)'s final written statement(s).
- The opponent's final statement should be addressed to The Council for Academic Research and Education and delivered to the following address:

Turku School of Economics
Rehtorinpellonkatu 3
FI-20500 TURKU, FINLAND

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE APPLIED GRADING SCALE USED FOR THE DOCTORAL THESIS

The opponent is expected to submit one of the following grades used in the Turku School of Economics for doctoral theses. The descriptions are not mandatory instructions to obey, but guidelines and exemplifications that may assist in grading the final thesis. In general, the basis for the guidelines is the contribution of the thesis, which typically becomes reflected in its potential to result in journal publications (and consequent citations). It is important to note that the grading concerns the Thesis as a whole, which should form a coherent entity, and not only the merits of some of its parts (e.g. published articles).

Laudatur, “Highly Significant”

The thesis provides an *exceptional contribution* to knowledge in its own field. It will most likely result, or has already resulted, in articles in major scientific refereed journals (major denoting a highly respected journal which, however, does not necessarily need to be among the ‘top 10’ or so, due to the variation in ranking procedures between different fields). The thesis will most likely be widely cited in the scientific literature.

Eximia cum laude approbatur, “Excellent”

The thesis provides a *very significant contribution* to knowledge in its own field. It contains innovative and creative ideas, and has great potential to result, or has already resulted, in one or more articles in major scientific refereed journals. It is expected to be cited in the scientific literature even widely.

Magna cum laude approbatur, “Very Good”

The thesis provides a *significant contribution* to knowledge in its own field. It may result or has already resulted in one or more articles in refereed scientific journals, even in major ones. It is expected to be cited in the scientific literature.

Cum laude approbatur, “Good”

The thesis provides a *rather significant contribution* to knowledge in its own field. The research results may be publishable or published in scientific refereed journals. It has some potential to be cited in the scientific literature.

Non sine laude approbatur, “Fair”

The scientific contribution of the thesis to knowledge in its own field *has some significance*. The thesis demonstrates the author’s ability to produce new scientific results. However, the ideas may not have fully matured. Further work may result in articles publishable in scientific refereed journals.

Lubenter, “Acceptable, but of Little Value”

The thesis fulfills the scientific criteria set for a doctoral dissertation, but its *scientific contribution in its own field is very limited*. Publishing the research results as an article in a scientific refereed journal will require a substantial amount of work.

Approbatur, “Barely Acceptable”

The thesis fulfills the minimal standards of acceptance. The thesis is highly unlikely to result in articles in scientific refereed journals.

Improbatur, “Not Acceptable”