

# PhD handbook



# PhD Handbook

This PhD handbook provides a comprehensive overview of doctoral education at the University of Agder (UiA). The information and guidelines presented in this handbook closely follow those outlined in UiA's official Regulations. The guide is designed to support everyone involved in the doctoral journey, from the initial application process to the requirements of a PhD programme.

Division of Research and Innovation, The University of Agder

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# Becoming a PhD candidate at UiA

For those aspiring to join the research community at UiA, this section serves as a practical guide to the preparation and application phase. Prospective PhD candidates should use this part of the PhD Handbook to learn about admission requirements, the application process, the contract, and the different PhD programmes offered at UiA.

## Admission requirements

To successfully apply for a PhD programme at UiA, you have two options:

- Apply for and get an announced Research Fellow (Candidate) position (see Vacancies at UiA).
- Obtain a financial guarantee from an employer or organisation. Such a guarantee normally includes 3 years of salary, operating costs, a work-place and supervision. The University of Agder does not accept private financial support (own saved money, funding by spouse/family, etc.) as a basis for admission to a PhD programme.

Your application also has to fulfill several requirements:

- Meet formal admission requirements concerning grades and subject area (regulations)
- Have the required competence with academic English
- Respect the duty of residence: The candidate should normally reside at the university for a significant part of the effective study period

Further information can be found on the PhD programme pages.

## Application process

There are several ways to apply to a PhD programme at UiA. The most common pathways include:

- Application may be submitted for an announced Research Fellowship position. Check available PhD positions at UiA.
- Application may also be submitted through the Industrial and Public PhD Schemes, designed for doctoral projects carried out within on-going employment in industry or the public sector. These projects are financed by the Research Council of Norway.

UiA offers both three-year and four-year Research Fellowship positions. Four-year positions include career-promoting work amounting to 25% of the total workload, leaving three years dedicated to the doctoral thesis. See the section on Career-Promoting Work for a Four-Year Position in the PhD Handbook.

The University may enter into arrangements with one or more Norwegian or foreign institutions concerning cooperation in the form of joint degrees or cotutelle agreements.

## Contract

Admission to a PhD programme requires the completion of a formal contract that outlines rights and obligations of the PhD candidate, the supervisor(s), and the faculty. The PhD contract must be completed and signed by all relevant parties as soon as the admission decision has been finalised. The contract regulates the responsibilities and expectations during the PhD period and facilitates progress toward completion within the agreed timeframe. The completed PhD contract must be submitted to the PhD co-ordinator responsible for the relevant programme.

Where a PhD candidate receives funding from, is employed by, or otherwise receives contributions from an external party, a separate agreement must be entered into between the candidate, the University, and the external party.

Where a PhD candidate will be affiliated with foreign institutions, the University's guidelines for such collaboration must be followed, and separate agreements must be entered into using the prescribed forms. The agreement(s) shall normally be in place at the same time as the PhD agreement.

# Onboarding

When starting a PhD at UiA, there are many things that PhD candidates, supervisors, departments, and faculties must do to ensure a smooth and effective onboarding process.

## PhD programmes at UiA

All admitted candidates are enrolled in one of UiA's PhD programmes. Each PhD programme includes courses worth a minimum of 30 ECTS credits. The courses cover key topics such as Research Methods, Ethics, and Research Practices. These courses are intended to provide PhD candidates with an understanding of ethical principles, regulatory frameworks, and practical challenges in research.

## Infrastructure and Integration

A PhD candidate's integration into the academic environment begins from the moment they join the university. PhD candidates are provided with office space, a computer, and access to UiA's network and infrastructure. In addition, supervisors, PhD co-ordinators, programme leaders, specialisation leaders, and heads of department take an active role in welcoming the PhD candidate into the academic community. Research groups also serve as a vital space for on-going collaboration, discussion, and professional development. Through shared effort and support, the PhD candidate becomes part of the professional and social life of the department.

Information about key administrative contacts can be found on the PhD programme webpages of each faculty.

## Library Services

The university library provides a wide range of services that support PhD candidates throughout their research journey. Becoming familiar with these services early in the doctoral process will help establish effective research practices and support long-term progress.

PhD candidates are also encouraged to become acquainted with PhD on Track, a national university library network that offers guidance on key aspects of the doctoral process.

## Subject Librarian

Each department has its own dedicated subject librarian who serves as a primary point of contact for library-related inquiries. Subject librarians connect PhD candidates to the university's collections and databases, while offering specialised expertise in the technical aspects of research support. PhD candidates are encouraged to connect with their subject librarian early in their project to receive guidance on the library's specialised tools and to ensure they make full use of the resources available to them throughout their PhD journey.

## Reference Management Support

The library offers guidance on reference management tools such as Zotero and EndNote. Support can include installation, synchronisation across devices, importing references from databases, and organising collections in a clear and functional structure. Library staff can also demonstrate how the tools integrate with writing software so that citations and bibliographies are generated efficiently and remain consistent throughout the writing process. For more information about sources and referencing, see the library's guides to sources and referencing.

## Understanding Citation Styles

Many PhD projects require familiarity with several citation styles. The library provides support with styles such as APA, IEEE, Harvard, Chicago, MLA, and discipline specific formats. This includes guidance on in-text citations, reference lists, and the correct handling of non-standard source types. The Citation Compass is also a useful tool that offers support to cite sources correctly.

## Literature Searches

A structured literature search forms a key foundation for most research projects. The library supports PhD candidates in developing effective search strategies for databases, journal platforms, Oria, and specialised collections. This support can include identifying relevant keywords, using controlled vocabularies, applying Boolean operators, combining search terms, filtering results, and setting up alerts for newly published material. Guidance is also provided for systematic and methodologically rigorous searches when required by the research design.

## Publishing Guidance

The library offers support for choosing suitable publishing and understanding journal quality indicators. Support can also include help in interpreting copyright agreements, ensuring PhD candidates understand their rights and the conditions for sharing or archiving their work in the Norwegian Research Information Repository (NVA).

For more information about Open Access, publishing agreements, and UiA's Rights Retention policy, see the library's guide to publishing.

## Research Data Management

Many PhD candidates work with data that require long term planning. The library provides support with data management plans, documentation practices, storage solutions, and archiving. This can include advice on file formats, ethical considerations, transparency in data handling, and sharing datasets when this is appropriate for the project.

For more information about data collection and processing, see the library's guide to data collection and processing.

## Research Schools

UiA is partnered with several national research schools that provide PhD candidates with both an academic and social space for further development. These schools function as networks that offer specialised courses and seminars designed to strengthen research through knowledge sharing across disciplines.

PhD candidates can apply to join a research school to present their work, build professional networks, and collaborate with scholars across institutions. PhD candidates are encouraged to discuss relevant research schools with their supervisors early in the doctoral journey to identify which networks best align with their research project and career goals.

## Research Integrity and Good Scientific Practice

PhD candidates at UiA are expected to adhere to recognised standards of research ethics and good scientific practice throughout their work. This includes ensuring honesty, transparency, accountability, and respect for research participants, colleagues, and society. PhD candidates must follow relevant national guidelines, including those from the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, as well as discipline-specific standards.

Good scientific practice involves proper data management, accurate reporting of results, appropriate authorship attribution, and avoidance of plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification. Supervisors and PhD candidates share responsibility for ensuring that research is conducted in accordance with these principles.

## Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in a PhD Thesis

PhD candidates at UiA are permitted to use AI tools as support in their research and writing. However, all use must comply with applicable publisher policies, UiA regulations, and relevant legislation. For article-based theses, candidates must familiarise themselves with the AI policies of the target journal or publisher prior to submission. For monographs and introductory synopses, UiA's guidelines for the use of AI in exams and written submissions apply.

AI guidelines for academic work are to ensure human authorship and transparency. The PhD candidate must remain the sole responsible author of all submitted work. AI tools cannot be credited as authors or co-authors, nor can they take responsibility for the content. Candidates are fully accountable for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of any material produced with AI assistance.

All use of AI tools must be clearly documented. This includes any use for generating, editing, summarising, translating, coding, or analysing text, data, or images. Candidates must include a statement describing which tools were used, how they were used, and to what extent. Depending on the nature of the use, this statement may be included in the methods section, acknowledgements, or another appropriate section.

Failure to disclose AI use, or misrepresentation of AI-generated content work without transparency, constitutes a breach of academic integrity and may be considered cheating, whether intentional or not.

AI tools must be used in accordance with data protection legislation and regulations and UiA's requirements for information security. As a general rule, only AI tools approved by UiA, with appropriate data processing agreements, should be used. When using external tools, candidates are responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable privacy laws and institutional guidelines.

## During the PhD

This part of the handbook supports PhD candidates through the main stages of their doctoral work. It describes the academic expectations at UiA, the practical routines that guide the research process, and the resources available throughout the PhD period. At relevant points, it outlines the responsibilities shared by PhD candidates, supervisors, the administration, and the wider community at UiA.

### Types of Theses

PhD candidates at UiA can choose between two approved formats for the doctoral thesis: a monograph or an article-based thesis. Both formats must represent an independent and original contribution to research within the discipline, and both are evaluated according to the same scientific standards. The choice of format should be discussed with the supervisory team early in the PhD period, since it influences publication plans, project structure, and the writing process.

A PhD thesis must be written in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English. If the candidate wishes to use another language, an application for special permission must be submitted at the time of admission.

### Monograph

A monograph is a single, coherent scholarly work that presents the full scope of the PhD research in one document. It develops a clear research narrative from beginning to end and often follows a traditional academic structure. This structure often includes key elements, such as an introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

### Article-based thesis

An article-based thesis consists of several scientific articles that together form the core of the research contribution. These articles must be publishable in recognised academic journals within the field. They are accompanied by a comprehensive “kappa” or introductory synopsis that links the articles into a coherent whole. The synopsis typically includes the overall research aims, theoretical foundations, methodological choices, ethical considerations, and a discussion that integrates findings from all articles.

The number of articles required varies across disciplines and faculties. At UiA, the expectation is set by the relevant PhD programme and follows national academic standards. Some articles may be co-authored, provided the candidate’s independent contribution is substantial and clearly documented. PhD candidates can consult the supplementary regulations for more details about each PhD programme.

Articles included in the thesis must also be included in a manner that allows the final dissertation to be deposited in the Norwegian Research Information Repository (NVA). We encourage PhD candidates to use the Author’s Accepted Manuscript (AAM) version of the article in the thesis (for

more information, see UiA's Rights Retention Policy). If the published version (sometimes called "Version of Record") is preferred, PhD candidates are responsible for obtaining permissions from the publisher to include in the thesis.

- Author's Accepted Manuscript: The version after peer review but before publisher formatting and typesetting.
- Version of Record: The final, formatted version released by the publisher.

## Supervision

Supervision is a central part of the PhD education at UiA. It provides academic guidance, support for professional development, and regular follow-up on research progress. Clear expectations help create a productive collaboration between the PhD candidate, the supervisors, and the administration.

The PhD candidate shall normally have two academic supervisors, with one appointed as the main supervisor. The main supervisor should be appointed at the time of admission. Both the PhD candidate and the supervisor may request that the faculty administration appoint a new supervisor for the candidate. The supervisor may not resign until a new supervisor has been appointed.

The roles described below outline how each part contributes to a well-functioning supervisory environment.

## Responsibilities of the PhD Candidate

PhD candidates are active partners in the supervisory process. They take responsibility for driving their research forward, engaging with feedback, and maintaining steady progress. PhD candidates are expected to:

- Take initiative together with their supervisors in scheduling and preparing supervisory meetings.
- Provide written material for review within agreed timelines.
- Communicate research plans, challenges, and developments in a clear and timely manner.
- Document progress through annual reports and internal milestones.
- Seek guidance on ethical issues, data management, and good research practices.
- Participate in relevant research groups, seminars, and training activities.
- Follow the requirements set by the PhD programme and the faculty.

## Responsibilities of Supervisors

Supervisors guide the candidate through the academic and practical aspects of the doctoral project. They help shape the research plan, offer constructive feedback, and support the candidate's development as an independent researcher. Supervisors are expected to:

- Take initiative together with the PhD candidate in scheduling and preparing supervisory meetings.

- Offer regular academic supervision throughout the PhD period.
- Contribute to the development of a realistic and academically sound project plan.
- Provide timely feedback on written work and research progress.
- Document progress through annual reports and internal milestones.
- Help the PhD candidate to find suitable training, courses, dissemination opportunities, and induct them into the relevant research group.
- Support the candidate in meeting ethical and methodological standards.
- Create a safe and respectful academic environment.

## Responsibilities of the Faculty Administration

The faculty administration, which includes PhD co-ordinators, department leaders, specialisation leaders, programme leaders, and the wider administration at the university, provides the framework that supports supervision and PhD education at UiA. It ensures that candidates and supervisors have clear procedures to follow and that progress is monitored in accordance with institutional and national regulations. The faculty administration is responsible for:

- Assisting with the start-up process.
- Appointing supervisors and approving changes to the supervisory team.
- Administering courses and study plans.
- Ensuring that candidates are enrolled in the correct programme and have access to relevant information.
- Organising mandatory evaluations and progress reports.
- Providing guidance on regulations, rights, and procedures.
- Facilitating communication between candidates, supervisors, programme leadership, and research groups.

## Progress and Milestones

PhD education at UiA follows a structured progression designed to support steady academic development. Regular milestones help ensure that the project is on track and that the candidate receives timely guidance.

## Career Development Plan

The department leaders are responsible for developing an individual career development plan together with the PhD candidate. The career plan serves as both a reflective process and a practical roadmap for identifying professional goals and the specific activities needed to achieve them. It is designed to help PhD candidates look beyond the immediate requirements of the doctoral thesis and consider their long-term qualifications for roles in academia, the public sector, or industry.

## Annual Progress Report

Each year, the PhD co-ordinator distributes a digital Annual Progress Report on behalf of the department leadership. The purpose of this report is to review the PhD candidate's academic

development, identify needs for support, and maintain a constructive dialogue between the candidate, the supervisors, and the department.

The PhD candidate completes the main report. This includes an overview of completed and on-going coursework, research milestones, dissemination activities, and any academic or practical challenges encountered. The report also provides room for reflections on general well-being, work environment, and overall experience throughout the year.

Supervisors submit a separate annual report. Their assessment focuses on academic progress as seen from the supervisory perspective, along with observations about the project's development and any support the candidate may require.

These reports are kept independent to encourage open and honest communication. This structure allows PhD candidates to share their experiences and supervisors to provide their professional evaluations without being influenced by the other's submission. It also helps the department identify areas where further guidance, resources, or intervention may be needed.

## Midway Seminar

Midway through the PhD period, PhD candidates will submit written material that shows the current development of the thesis. The project is presented at the seminar, and an external reviewer provides feedback on academic quality, structure, and overall progress. The midway seminar supports the on-going development of the project and helps identify areas that may benefit from further refinement.

## 90% Seminar

As the thesis approaches its final stages, many PhD programmes hold a 90% seminar (sometimes called "End Seminar"). The PhD candidate submits a near-finished manuscript, which allows the external reviewer to assess coherence, structure, and readiness for submission. The seminar provides constructive comments that support the final revision phase. It also gives the PhD candidate practice presenting and discussing the thesis in a formal setting, which is valuable preparation for the doctoral defence.

## Career-Promoting Work for Four-Year Positions

PhD candidates employed in a four-year position will have career-promoting work that make up 25% of the total workload. The remaining three years are reserved for work on the thesis.

Career-promoting work may include:

- Teaching, laboratory and training activities, supervision, and exam work within the PhD candidate's field of expertise.
- Support for the organisation of academic conferences.
- Participation in the preparation of research project applications.
- Teaching relating to the use and management of research infrastructure.

- Assistance to other researchers or research groups in various research tasks.
- Other qualifying work at the department, such as dissemination, exhibition and collection work, library tasks, consultancy work, and assessment work.

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the total amount of career-promoting work does not exceed one year of the full-time work during the four-year period. This should be arranged so that the final year of the PhD period is fully dedicated to the PhD project.

## Absence and Delays

The researcher training is organised to allow PhD candidates to complete the programme within the nominal length of study. If unexpected circumstances lead to periods of absence, PhD candidates may qualify for an extension in line with relevant employment regulations.

## Illness and Leaves of Absence During the Funding Period

These regulations include provisions for extending the employment period when authorised or agreed leave takes place. The following forms of absence provide an automatic extension of the PhD period:

- Sickness absence
- Parental leave
- Unpaid leave to care for a child
- Leave for nursing mothers
- Compassionate leave

## Apply for an Extension Beyond the Funding Period

PhD programmes at UiA have a nominal duration of three years of full-time study. If the work is not completed within this period and funding is close to ending, PhD candidates may apply to the faculty for an extension of their study period. The application must include clear milestones and a timeline that shows the feasibility of completing the project within the proposed period. The main supervisor must support the application. The application must also include an overview of completed work, such as publications, and a description of the work that remains.

The faculty may grant an extension of up to one year. When an extension goes beyond one year after the original completion date, the application must be considered by the PhD committee.

## Publication and Other Dissemination Activities

Publishing and disseminating research are central parts of the PhD experience. Throughout the doctoral period, PhD candidates may contribute to the academic community through publications, conference participation, and other forms of scholarly communication.

When publishing the PhD thesis, PhD candidates employed by UiA must comply with the University's standard affiliation rules and list UiA as their institutional address. PhD candidates employed

externally must list both UiA and the address of their main employer on publications. This requirement also applies to works wholly or mainly carried out during the PhD education but published subsequently.

UiA offers several forms of structured support for academic writing and publication preparation.

### **Writing for Publication (UiA PULS)**

UiA PULS provides a dedicated course on writing for publication and presenting, which is designed for academic staff and PhD candidates who aim to publish in English language academic journals. The writing course focuses on:

- Requirements of peer reviewed journals
- Strategies for effective academic writing
- Structure, style and genre expectations
- Understanding the publication process
- Strengthening writing skills for top journals in the field

The presentation course focuses on:

- Preparation of material, structuring content and delivery
- Improving pronunciation
- Visual aids and body language
- Feedback on part of your own presentation

This course is offered regularly on both campuses and is free of charge for PhD candidates at UiA.

### **The Writing Lounge**

UiA also provides drop-in academic writing support through the Writing Lounge, available to both students and staff. Writing mentors offer guidance on:

- Academic writing technique
- Structure and clarity
- Addressing writer's block
- Study skills and reading strategies

### **Open Access Publishing Support at UiA**

Open Access (OA) publishing makes research freely available to anyone who wants to read it. UiA has several systems in place to help PhD candidates publish openly without paying publishing fees themselves.

UiA has an Open Access policy that encourages scientific articles to be made as openly accessible as possible. The university also has a rights retention policy that allows UiA to make articles available under a Creative Commons license so that research can reach a wider audience.

For PhD candidates, the most important steps are:

1. Choose a journal that supports Open Access. UiA provides guidance and links to approved publishing channels through its library pages.

2. Use UiA's Open Access Fund if the journal is a pure Open Access journal.

UiA's Open Access Fund covers article processing charges (APCs) for articles published in fully Open Access journals. To receive support, the journal must:

- i. Be listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- ii. Be approved at level 1 or 2 in the Norwegian national register of publishing channels (Kanalregisteret).

3. Apply for support through UiA's application form if the journal meets the criteria. The form is available through UiA's publishing webpage.

## Registering Research Activities in the Norwegian Research Information Repository (NVA)

PhD candidates are required to register all publications and research activities in the Norwegian Research Information Repository (NVA), the national system for registration of research results in Norway. The guiding principle is simple: all research activities and outputs should be registered in NVA. Research activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Journal articles
- Book chapters
- Conference publications
- Presentations
- Podcasts
- Interviews for newspapers, radio, or other media
- And, eventually, the PhD thesis

Registering research results contributes to national reporting requirements and strengthens the overall research documentation of the institution. Crucially, each registered research activity becomes part of a visible academic profile that reflects the development and achievements of the PhD candidate. Over time, this creates a comprehensive record of scholarly work that can support future applications, collaborations, and career opportunities.

For more information about how to register research results, see the library's guide to NVA.

## Research Catalogue for Artist Research PhD Programme

For PhD candidates enrolled in the Artist Research PhD Programme, it is mandatory to use the Research Catalogue, a non-commercial platform developed by the Society for Artistic Research. It is designed specifically to support the documentation, presentation, and publication of artistic research. Since UiA's Artist Research PhD Programme requires PhD candidates to work with multimodal materials and document artistic processes, the Research Catalogue provides an environment tailored to these needs.

## International Research Visits

PhD candidates are encouraged to include a research visit abroad as part of their doctoral training. A stay abroad can provide significant academic benefits and opportunities to build international networks, develop language skills, gain cultural insight, and experience new learning environments.

The Research Council of Norway offers scholarships for research visits for PhD candidates funded by the Council. Information about available opportunities is provided on the Research Council's website.

Some faculties also offer financial support for research visits abroad. PhD candidates can contact the faculty's PhD co-ordinator to learn more about available schemes.

Preparing for a research visit abroad requires planning and often involves early deadlines for funding. PhD candidates are encouraged to begin planning well in advance to ensure that applications, approvals, and practical arrangements can be completed in time.

# Completing the PhD

The final phase of the PhD programme consists of several formal steps that lead from submission of the thesis to the public defence and the conferral of the doctoral degree. The steps described below outline the key stages and responsibilities for PhD candidates at UiA.

## Submission

Application for assessment of the thesis may only be submitted after the coursework and training component has been approved. When the PhD thesis is ready for evaluation, it must be submitted to the faculty's PhD co-ordinator.

PhD candidates are responsible for ensuring that the thesis follows UiA's formatting requirements. The library can provide additional assistance and can be contacted at [researchsupport@uia.no](mailto:researchsupport@uia.no).

PhD co-ordinators are responsible for forwarding the submitted thesis to the library as soon as it is received. The library then reviews the formatting and verifies ownership rights for article-based theses.

## Assessment

Once the application for assessment of the doctoral thesis has been submitted, the faculty appoints an evaluation committee of at least three members. The committee is appointed based on proposals from the relevant department, and the PhD candidate is informed of its composition. The PhD candidate may submit a comment about the committee within one week of receiving the information.

The evaluation committee assesses the dissertation and prepares a written report, normally within three months of receiving the thesis. The report explains the basis for the committee's conclusions and states whether the dissertation is considered worthy of public defence. The PhD candidate is given ten working days to submit written comments on the report if they wish to do so.

## Revisions Required

A PhD thesis that has not been found worthy of public defence may be resubmitted for assessment in a revised version no earlier than six months after the faculty has made its decision.

A PhD thesis may only be reassessed once.

In the event of resubmission, the PhD candidate must clearly state that the thesis was assessed previously and not found worthy of a public defence.

## Rejection

If the committee concludes that fundamental changes to theory, hypotheses, material, or methods are necessary before the thesis can meet the minimum standards for research competence, it will recommend rejection.

## Thesis Approved

A thesis is approved for public defence when it is considered an independent and comprehensive scientific work that meets the requirements for research competence. Approval does not imply that the thesis is without flaws. Remaining weaknesses must be of a type that can be addressed and explained during the public defence.

The PhD candidate will be notified once the assessment committee has set a date for the public defence. The committee's recommendation is normally available five to six weeks before the planned defence date.

## Printing and Archiving the Thesis

Once the thesis has been approved for public defence, the final version must be prepared for printing and archiving.

The PhD candidate is responsible for submitting the completed manuscript to the relevant PhD co-ordinator. To facilitate the formal publication, the PhD co-ordinator assigns the necessary ISBN and series numbers before forwarding the manuscript to the communication department. The communication department then finalises the manuscript with a cover page and manages the printing process.

To ensure the long-term visibility and preservation of the thesis, the PhD co-ordinator provides a digital copy of the completed thesis to the library. The library is then responsible for depositing the thesis into Norwegian Research Information Repository (NVA).

## Errata List

Minor errors of a formal nature may be corrected after the thesis has been submitted for evaluation and before additional printed copies are produced. Only typographical, layout or similar non substantial errors may be corrected. Changes that affect the academic content are not permitted. All formal corrections must be submitted no later than one month before the public defence.

To request corrections, an errata list must be submitted to the PhD co-ordinator of the faculty where the thesis was originally submitted. The list must include all errors to be corrected and must be received no later than 10 days after the evaluation committee's recommendation has been issued.

## Trial Lecture and Public Defence

The trial lecture and the public defence are normally held on the same day and take place on UiA's premises. Both events form part of the final assessment of the PhD work.

## Trial Lecture

The evaluation committee assigns the topic for the trial lecture. The faculty administration communicates this topic 10 working days before the lecture is to be held. The trial lecture must be held

in the language in which the thesis is written unless the faculty itself approves the use of another language.

The lecture should last 45 minutes, allowing the PhD candidate to demonstrate their ability to present their research topic in a clear and structured way. The lecture should be designed for an audience with prior knowledge equivalent to that expected of advanced students in the relevant subject area. In its assessment, the committee places emphasis on both academic content and the ability to convey knowledge effectively.

The assessment committee notifies the faculty whether the trial lecture has been approved or not. If the trial lecture is not approved, an explanation must be given.

## **Public Defence**

Two appointed opponents conduct the academic discussion. They determine how to divide their tasks. The maximum total duration of the public defence is three hours, including a 15-minute break between the two opponents. The defence chair is responsible for ensuring that the proceedings follow the prescribed structure and that the allotted time is used effectively.

The opponents are free to pursue questions not mentioned in the committee's written recommendation. They aim to conduct the discussion in a way that allows members of the audience without specialised knowledge of the thesis to follow the exchange.

After the first opponent has completed their opposition, the defence chair invites comments or questions *ex auditorio* from members of the audience.

After both opponents have completed their opposition, the defence chair then concludes the session and formally closes the public defence.

## **Conferral and Certification**

The conferral of the PhD degree is the formal recognition that the doctoral work has been completed and approved. At this stage, the degree of Philosophiae Doctor is officially awarded.

UiA holds an annual PhD conferral ceremony in June of each year to honour all candidates who have completed their doctoral education at the university. An official invitation to the ceremony is sent by the university, and candidates are welcome to invite close family members and friends to attend.

Participation in the ceremony is strongly encouraged, but not required. Candidates who are unable to attend will have their diploma and final transcript sent to their registered private address after the conferral ceremony.



#### **Division of Research and Innovation**

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