

Instructions for reviewers of doctoral dissertations

1. Review

The degree candidate should receive the text of the review at least one week before the defense. A signed original of the review should be submitted to the promotion council¹ before the defense.

There is no fixed format for the review. From the content of the review, it should be clear whether the dissertation fulfills the criteria set out in the Clause 15 of the Cabinet of Ministers regulations Nr. 1001 „The order and the criteria for awarding a doctoral degree” (from December 27, 2005).

15.1 the author of the promotion work² has

- explained the choice of the topic;
- defined the goals and the objectives of the research;
- characterized his/her scientific achievements in the research on this topic and the methods that have been used;
- discussed the results that have been achieved, compiling them into conclusions to be defended.

15.2 promotion work is a finished original work, whose results have important role in the respective subfield of science.

15.3 the amount of the research that has been done is sufficient, according to the requirements defined in the regulations of the promotion council³.

15.4.the work uses up-to-date methods for analysis and data processing.

15.5.the results have been published in scientific press or as a monograph or have been patented.

15.6. the results have been presented in international scientific conferences or workshops.

15.7. no falsification, plagiarism or other breach of scientific ethic has been committed.

¹ Promotion council is the council that grants the doctoral degrees. It consists of faculty members in the respective area of science.

² „Promotion work” is the work to be defended. Usually, promotion work is a doctoral dissertation. Regulations also permit collections of research articles or monographs as the promotion work but, in practice, such instances are quite rare.

³ The regulations of the promotion council in computer science at the University of Latvia only say that „the size of the dissertation should not exceed 150 pages, excluding the appendices”.

Typically, the review starts with a description of dissertation's results. This is followed by reviewer's evaluation of these results. Then, more specific comments on specific results or presentation are given.

2. Defense procedure

Defense consists of the following steps:

- 1) Chairman of the promotion council opens the defense;
- 2) Secretary of the council reads the biography of the degree candidate';
- 3) The candidate presents his/her work (up to 30 minutes);
- 4) Everyone who is present can ask questions on the topic of the dissertation and the candidate must answer them.
- 5) Ph.D. advisor presents his review of the dissertation;
- 6) The reviewers⁴ read their review or present its main conclusions in a free format. If a reviewer is not present, their review is read by a council member.
- 7) The candidate may respond to the criticism of reviewers (but he/she is also allowed to postpone the response).
- 8) An academic discussion is announced and everyone who is present can speak during the discussion. The discussion does not include further questioning of the candidate. The candidate can, however, participate in the discussion and express his/her opinion.
- 9) Candidate says his/her final word.
- 10) Everyone, except members of the promotion council and the reviewers, is asked to leave the room.
- 11) Members of the promotion council and the reviewers vote about granting the doctoral degree, in a closed ballot.
- 12) Results of the vote are announced.

The text of the dissertation that has been submitted for the defense is final. The council may accept it and grant the doctoral degree (if the dissertation fulfills the criteria for granting the degree) or reject it (if it does not fulfill the criteria) but no changes can be requested.

The defense is open to general public. The working language of the promotion council is Latvian but foreign reviewers can speak in English.

The defense is primarily focused on the thesis that is being considered. Unlike in some other countries, the defense is not a test of student's general knowledge of the area (which is tested at earlier stages of the Ph.D. program).

⁴ Defense can take place if at least 2 of 3 reviewers are present in person.