

# Recommendations for the mid-term review of a dissertation at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lapland

## Contents

1. Purpose
2. Preparation
3. Seminar procedure
4. Post-seminar measures

## 1. Purpose

The main purpose of the mid-term review is to help doctoral students progress in their work. The goal is for both the doctoral student and the supervisors to be able to determine whether the dissertation project is progressing and whether the objectives defined in the research plan are being achieved. The review also helps to determine whether the goals set out in the work plan have been achieved in terms of knowledge and skills.

## 2. Preparation

### **Communication**

Once the supervisor and doctoral student have agreed that the research has reached the halfway point, the supervisor is responsible for organizing the mid-term review. The review is conducted in the form of a public seminar, and the faculty is notified of it in good time. The location and time of the seminar will be announced, and a summary of the dissertation will be submitted to the faculty. The summary should be approximately 500 words in length and include the following recommended headings:

- Title
- Background
- Research questions (research problem)
- Method
- Preliminary results
- Significance of the research

The summary and information about where and when the seminar will be held should be sent to Tiina Leppänen (tiina.leppanen@ulapland.fi). The faculty will announce the seminar through its available communication channels.

### **Appointment of an examiner**

The supervisor will appoint an external examiner who holds a doctoral degree. The examiner must not have any joint articles with the doctoral student in the dissertation project. The examiner should have expertise in the field covered by the dissertation.

There is no obstacle to the mid-term examiner later acting as the preliminary examiner for the dissertation. The supervisor is responsible for informing the examiner about the nature of the event.

### **Manuscript/published articles**

Work completed up to that point is sent to the examiner one month before the mid-term review. The examiner is expected to keep unpublished material confidential and refrain from sharing it with others. However, at the seminar itself, all material sent to the examiner may be discussed publicly.

**Monograph:** If the dissertation is to be defended as a monograph, the doctoral student must send the already written part of the manuscript to the examiner, along with a few pages summarizing what the unwritten parts of the dissertation will contain or how the book will be completed. The manuscript must include an introductory section that gives the examiner a sufficient understanding of the entire research project, including the parts that are not yet complete.

**Article-based dissertation:** If the dissertation is to be defended as an article-based dissertation, the doctoral student must send the supervisor the published articles and the manuscripts of articles undergoing the referee process. In addition, a draft version of the dissertation summary must be submitted, which also includes summaries of separate articles, both published and unpublished. The examiner must be able to gain a sufficiently clear understanding of the entire research project.

## **3. Seminar procedure**

The core of the mid-term seminar is the dialogue between the doctoral student and the examiner. All the doctoral student's supervisors should participate in the mid-term review.

One of the supervisors opens the seminar and acts as its chair.

The doctoral student presents the completed part of the thesis and then their plans for continuing the work until the dissertation. The presentation should last no longer than 15 minutes.

The presentation is followed by a discussion, during which an external examiner asks questions about the results and the planned continuation of the work and assesses the doctoral student's expertise in the research topic by discussing it with the doctoral student. This part lasts no longer than 1 hour.

After this, the supervisor acting as chair opens the discussion with the audience and leads it. This part lasts no longer than 30 minutes.

The chair concludes the seminar by thanking the examiner and the audience. Unlike in a dissertation defense, no public formal assessment of the doctoral student's performance is given.

#### 4. Follow-up measures after the seminar

If necessary, a private discussion will be arranged between the doctoral student, the supervisor, and the external examiner.

In cases where the mid-term review shows that the work has not progressed satisfactorily and/or that the work plan has not been followed, the dean may discuss with the doctoral student, supervisor, and external examiner how to proceed in order to complete the dissertation.