



UNIVERSITY OF TURKU GRADUATE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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HANDBOOK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU GRADUATE SCHOOL

The purpose of the new Graduate School of the University of Turku, which began its activities in 2011, is to organise systematic and structured doctoral training that is of high quality and takes place within a controlled time frame. The main aim of doctoral training is to give PhD students the skills in order to work as a researcher. In addition, it prepares them for teaching and other demanding expert tasks. The Graduate School and the doctoral programmes included in it ensure for their part that a sufficient number of high-level researchers and experts are educated for the needs of universities, business life and society.

The objective of this Handbook is to set out a quality management system by which the University of Turku Graduate School and the doctoral programmes included in it are able to fulfil their basic function in a reliable and high-quality manner in all fields of operation. The target groups for Graduate School quality assurance are the doctoral programmes, PhD students and their supervisors, staff, cooperation partners and the financiers of the operation.

Central concepts used in the Handbook:

- **The Graduate School** coordinates doctoral training at the University of Turku. Its structure and methods are in accordance with the recommendations given by the Academy of Finland on developing research education.
- **Doctoral programmes** are included in the Graduate School. Previously (until 2011) they were called graduate schools in the system of the Academy of Finland. The doctoral programmes can be network programmes supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture or the Academy of Finland, or local programmes supported by the Academy and the Ministry, the faculties and the University of Turku. Additional financiers include research institutes, research foundations as well as national and international research programmes.
- **PhD student** in this Handbook refers to all students pursuing a doctoral degree. In the job structure of teaching and research staff at the University of Turku, PhD student is a job title.
- **Faculty:** in this Handbook, the term 'faculty' refers to the faculties of the University of Turku and the Turku School of Economics.



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1 University of Turku Graduate School – tasks and organisation

1.1 Operational idea and objectives

The University of Turku Graduate School coordinates and supports the activities of the doctoral programmes operating within the University. Its objective is to guarantee the quality and smooth progress of doctoral training and to ensure that the supervision of PhD students is effective. The Graduate School ensures that the doctoral programmes have adequate infrastructure and operational preconditions for carrying out doctoral training. It offers the doctoral programmes multidisciplinary training focusing on transferable skills and career planning. The aim is to educate researchers and experts of high quality.

1.2 Organisation and areas of responsibility

The Vice Rector in charge of doctoral training is the director of the Graduate School. The operation of the Graduate School is managed by a coordinator.

The Graduate School Board at the University of Turku monitors, supervises and evaluates doctoral and other research training and their quality assurance at the level of the University. It also coordinates the cooperation with the faculties, for example, by organising joint teaching for the PhD students (e.g. transferable skills/generic skills) and the supervisors and disseminates good practices. This is done, for instance, through the Graduate School web page. The director of the Graduate School is the chairperson of the Board, which consists of representatives of those responsible for doctoral degrees in the faculties as well as PhD student representatives.

Each doctoral programme has a responsible leader and a Board, the task of which is to coordinate and develop the activities of the doctoral programme.

1.3 Administration of the Graduate School

The tasks of the Graduate School Office include, amongst others, the following:

- coordination related to doctoral training, especially planning, organising and developing joint courses offered for different doctoral programmes
- monitoring how well University of Turku instructions and recommendations on doctoral training are followed
- receiving and responding to contacts from the Academy of Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as different financiers and other cooperation partners
- coordination of regular meetings for the academic and student affairs personnel responsible for doctoral training in the university.

2 Admission of PhD students

2.1 Aims of PhD student admission

The objective of the PhD student admission procedure is to select students who are suitable for a research career, and who are talented, motivated and



committed to research and doctoral training. The aim is to evaluate the scientific thinking skills of the applicant, their ability to master the central concepts and models of the field as well as the skills necessary to define and solve scientific problems.

2.2 Admission criteria

In accordance with Section 21 of the University of Turku Rules of Procedure, the faculty council decides on the admission criteria for PhD students. In accordance with Section 5 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, PhD students are selected to pursue a degree according to admission criteria which have been defined and published in advance. When the University cannot accept all the applicants in order to limit the number of PhD students, uniform admission criteria are applied.

In the main, students who have completed a higher university degree or a comparable degree are accepted for doctoral training. In accordance with Section 37, Paragraph 9 of the Universities Act, a person whom the university judges otherwise to have sufficient knowledge and skills for the studies may also be eligible for studies.

Admission is based on the applicant's previous study success (pro gradu work and other major subject studies); research plan; study, financing and career plans; research experience, or other merits. The suitability and motivation of the applicant may be evaluated with an exam and/or interview. In addition, it must be ensured that the applicant has sufficient language skills for pursuing doctoral training.

The availability of supervision resources also affects the admission decision. A prerequisite for admission is that there is at least one supervisor who has given his/her agreement and fulfils the qualification requirements.

Quotas may be set for the number of PhD students, based on degree targets or the educational needs of the field. In this case, admission is tied to application periods, which take place at least once a year.

2.3 Applying and handling of applications

The content of the application and the required attachments are defined in the admission criteria decided by the faculties. The application is always attached with a research plan and a preliminary study plan (preliminary progress schedule and a plan on the content of the degree) as well as possible career and financing plans.

The faculty body responsible for doctoral training handles the applications and prepares the PhD student admission procedure. The Dean / the Director of Turku School of Economics accepts the new PhD students in accordance with the University of Turku Rules of Procedure.

The right to study is not granted if the applicant does not fulfil the admission criteria. Inadequate supervision or financing resources or that suitable expertise is not available for the applicant's research topic may also lead to rejection. The applicant will be notified of the grounds for rejection and instructions for the appeal process are attached to the decision. The appeal for rectification of student selection decisions is defined in the University of Turku Regulation on Studies (Section 9). In the administration of a rectification



request, the results of student selection may not be changed to cause the detriment of someone already admitted to study.

Whenever possible, those who apply for doctoral training but do not fulfil the admission criteria are given information on other study possibilities.

3 PhD students / supervisors in the Graduate School

The purpose of academic supervision is not only to support the thesis work and formal training, but also to develop and encourage the PhD student in critical and constructive scientific thinking, to support the integration of the PhD student into the scientific community and to advance the development of professional expertise.

The faculty appoints the supervisors for the PhD student. The responsible/main supervisor of the doctoral thesis must be at least an adjunct professor (*dosentti*). The special expertise of adjunct professors and post-doc researchers is utilised in the supervision whenever possible. The Board of the Graduate School is responsible for organising training for the supervisors that crosses faculty boundaries and enables synergy benefits, as well as for other support measures that help those who have completed a doctoral degree to become more competent supervisors.

A supervision plan is prepared for the supervision of the doctoral thesis. The plan defines the responsibilities and obligations of the unit (faculty/department/subject and doctoral programme), the supervisor(s) and the PhD student as well as the commitment to the cooperation relationship. The supervision plan may also include, for example, the principles for publishing articles and the practices of the field/research group on the authors' names and their order. Other matters that can be agreed on separately may include the rights of the inventions made in the research projects, patents etc. Significant changes in the supervision plan are discussed in the thesis advisory committee (*seurantaryhmä*) established for the PhD student or in the faculty body that coordinates doctoral training.

The faculties and doctoral programmes define in more detail those procedures by which the rights and obligations of both the PhD student and the supervisor are ensured.

3.1 Responsibilities of PhD students

The PhD student must commit to his/her research project by aiming at high academic quality and following research ethical rules. The PhD student has an obligation to follow the set timetables and work in collaboration with the supervisors of the research and the thesis advisory committee.

In the supervision plan template, intended as an example and attached to the University of Turku recommendations on doctoral training, the responsibilities of the PhD student are defined so that they:

- carefully prepare for the meetings and follow the agreed timetables
- complete formal training for the doctoral degree independently with the supervisor's support
- prepare a personal study plan and revise it at least annually
- annually participate in the agreed number of courses



- are responsible for the progress of the thesis project and research and for informing the supervisor on the progress made according to the agreed reporting schedule and in the agreed way
- give presentations in research seminars on the progress of the thesis project as often as agreed
- inform the supervisor (thesis advisory committee, faculty's doctoral committee) of all the changes that considerably affect working conditions, progress of the thesis project or keeping to the agreed schedule.

3.2 Responsibilities of supervisors

The obligation of the supervisor is to commit to regular supervision work and to advancing the research work of the supervisee, as well as to advise the PhD student on the practices of research. The supervisor must reserve enough time for all supervisees and meet them regularly. The supervisor ensures the quality of the thesis manuscript and its eligibility for pre-examination.

In the supervision plan template, intended as an example and attached to the University of Turku recommendations on doctoral training, the responsibilities of the supervisor are defined so that they:

- commit to supervising the PhD student's thesis work throughout
- give feedback regularly and within a reasonable amount of time
- familiarise the PhD student with academic work and practical matters related to scientific qualifications (e.g. publications, conferences, researcher mobility, ethical principles) in a mutually agreed way
- assist the PhD student in applying for funding: give information on funding opportunities and provide written recommendations when needed
- assess whether the doctoral thesis manuscript is ready for pre-examination (together with the possible thesis advisory committee)
- inform the PhD student of any significant changes that affect supervision arrangements.

3.3 Personal study plan (HOPS)

All PhD students prepare a personal study plan at the latest when their doctoral training begins. The content of the personal study plan is defined by the faculty. The personal study plan is a supervision tool for doctoral training and it helps the PhD student to perceive the entity of the degree. The study plan also gives support to the PhD student's independent decisions and his/her own responsibility for the progress of the doctoral dissertation.

The supervisor of the doctoral thesis approves the study plan and its implementation is regularly monitored, for example, in the meetings and reporting defined in the supervision plan. The personal study plan of the PhD student is updated throughout the whole doctoral training when needed.

3.4 Content and extent of degree

In accordance with Section 21 of the University of Turku Rules of Procedure, it is the responsibility of the faculty, amongst other things, to develop education and research in the faculty, to adopt the curricula, to approve doctoral and licentiate theses and to give permission for the defence of dissertations at a public examination.



The doctoral degree comprises a doctoral thesis and related research. In addition, it consists of formal training, the extent of which is 40–60 ECTS credits, depending on the field.

The extent and supervision of the doctoral degree will be such that it can be completed in four years if working full-time. Assistance given to those working part-time on their doctoral degree will be improved.

Each PhD student must actively participate in the doctoral training offered by the graduate school / doctoral programme / faculty / department / subject. The faculties define in more detail the characteristics of active participation and they are included in the supervision plan prepared on doctoral thesis supervision.

The formal training must support the doctoral thesis work and provide the skills required for both a professional career in research and other positions of expertise.

In addition to the research work and related formal training, the degree consists of the philosophy of science, research ethics, international scientific activities and other courses on transferable/generic skills. These may include, amongst others, pedagogical skills; managerial, presentation, interaction and communication skills; entrepreneurship and project management skills.

The faculties define clear descriptions on the grounds for the determination of grades for the doctoral theses if they are evaluated otherwise than on a pass/fail grading scale.

3.5 Right to study and the passive register

In accordance with the Regulation on Studies, a student who has registered as attending holds the right to study. A student must hold the right to study which is required for his/her courses. The right to study of a PhD student is decided on based on his/her study plan approved by the faculty. A PhD student may only hold one right to study for a doctoral degree at the University of Turku at a time.

In accordance with Section 8 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, a PhD student's right to study will be transferred to the passive register if he/she has not pursued doctoral studies or participated in supervision according to what has been agreed during the last three academic years. The right to study will also be declared passive if the PhD student has enrolled as non-attending or neglected to enrol during the last three academic years.

PhD students can have their right to study reactivated by preparing/updating their personal study plan (including a research plan) and submitting it to be approved by the faculty.

3.6 Legal protection of PhD students

The University of Turku Rules of Procedure and the Regulation on Studies determine the procedures related to legal protection, such as appeals for rectification of student admission decisions, decisions on losing the right to study and the evaluation of a completed course or thesis.

- In accordance with Section 9 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, those who are dissatisfied with **PhD student admission** may make an appeal in writing for rectification from the faculty or other unit



responsible for PhD student admission decisions within 14 days of the published results. When the results are published, the applicant must be informed of how the admission criteria have been applied to him/her and how a request for rectification can be made. A reversal of the decision on rectification can be sought as enacted in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996) and in the Universities Act (558/2009). In the administration of a rectification request, the results of PhD student selection may not be changed to cause the detriment of someone already admitted to study.

- In accordance with Section 7 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, a PhD student who has **lost his/her right to study** may issue a written demand for rectification of the decision within 14 days of service of notice. The demand is addressed to the person who made the decision. A reversal of the decision on rectification can be sought as enacted in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996) and in the Universities Act (558/2009).
- In accordance with Section 19 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, a PhD student may appeal either orally or in writing for **rectification of the grades of completed courses, studies completed elsewhere and the recognition of competence proved in some other way** from the teacher responsible for the grade or the person who decided on the recognition. The appeal for rectification must be made within fourteen (14) days after the PhD student has had the possibility to be informed about the decision. The decision concerning the appeal for rectification will be given in writing. A PhD student who is dissatisfied with the decision may bring the matter to the **Board of Examiners** for consideration within fourteen (14) days after being informed about the decision. The composition of the Board of Examiners is regulated in the University Rules of Procedure (Section 47) and more detailed instructions concerning it are given in the Regulation on Studies (Section 20). In order to make a decision, the Board of Examiners must hear the person responsible for the grade or the recognition of studies. The Board of Examiners may also consult external specialists. An appeal for rectification may not be made of a decision which has been made as a result of an appeal for rectification and which concerns the grade of a completed course or the recognition of studies.
- In accordance with Section 19 of the University of Turku Regulation on Studies, prior to the **grading of a doctoral thesis**, the author must be reserved an opportunity to supply a rejoinder to the statement of the preliminary examiner, the examiner or the opponent. A PhD student may appeal for rectification of the grading of a doctoral thesis or a licentiate thesis in writing to the administrative body responsible for the grading of the thesis within fourteen (14) days after being informed about the decision. An appeal for rectification may not be made of a decision which has been made as a result of an appeal for rectification and which concerns the grade of a thesis.
- In this Handbook, the term PhD student refers to all the students pursuing doctoral degrees. Some of them are also in an **employment relationship** with the University of Turku, when the regulations in the labour legislation are applied, as well as the qualification requirements of personnel defined in the University of Turku Rules of Procedure (Chapter 8). Further, in accordance with Section 44 of the Rules of Procedure, the University



selects for each post the applicant deemed likely to be the most successful in performing the duties of the post, based on their education, work experience and other matters. The applicants will be treated equally, taking gender equality into account.

4 Feedback and evaluation system of the Graduate School

Monitoring of the progress of studies in the faculties will also be extended to doctoral training. The feedback given by the supervisors and the thesis advisory committees can be utilised in monitoring the progress. The faculties must pay special attention to the high quality of the doctoral theses, which enables a professional research career for the PhD student and provides the capability for completing an international post-doc phase. The faculties are responsible for systematically collecting feedback on doctoral training in cooperation with the academic career services of the University, as well as for maintaining placement surveys on those who have completed a doctoral degree. Feedback must be collected both from PhD students, graduated doctorates and central interest groups and it must be taken into account in developing doctoral training.

5 Appendices

Recommendations on doctoral training at the University of Turku