



INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPPONENT OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OFFICIAL OPPONENT'S STATEMENT

The opponent's statement consists of an evaluation of the dissertation and its public defence. The statement constitutes the final basis for the Faculty Board's decision on whether to approve the dissertation or not. Thus, it is important that the opponent clearly states: 1) any defects of the dissertation, 2) the merits of the dissertation, 3) **a clear stand on whether the dissertation should be approved or not, and propose a grade for the dissertation.**

The opponent's statement may be in free form, but it should include the same points that are mentioned in the instructions concerning the examiner's statement (see pp. 4-5), where applicable. In addition, the opponent's statement should include a brief description and evaluation of the public examination of the dissertation and any contributions of the other participants.

The opponent's statement should end with a summary commenting the originality of the subject of the dissertation. It should clearly state whether the topic is relevant, is handled in a way that meets scientific criteria and whether the dissertation, in general, is original and thorough. The contribution of the dissertation should be identified: Does the research verify previously obtained results, complement the results in previous research or does it provide novel and unanticipated findings? Special mention should be made as to whether the dissertation includes observations and conclusions that potentially have an important impact on the field of research in question. At end of statement the opponent proposes a grade for the dissertation according to following scale:

Approbatur: The work is seriously deficient, but it meets the requirements for a doctoral thesis.

Lubenter approbatur: The work has several significant deficiencies without special merits which would compensate for them.

Non sine laude approbatur: The work has deficiencies without sufficient merits compensating for them.

Cum laude approbatur: The work is a good scientific effort. It is conceptually and linguistically clear; the research question, the methodological choices and conclusions are well grounded and the materials are relevant. The special merits of the work compensate for the deficiencies.

Magna cum laude approbatur: The work has special scientific merits without deficiencies which detract from them.

Eximia cum laude approbatur: The work has very significant scientific merits without deficiencies to detract from them.

Laudatur: The work is scientifically ambitious and very praiseworthy.



PROCEDURE AT DISPUTATION (public defence)

1. When the participants of the disputation enter the room, the doctoral candidate who defends the dissertation enters first, followed by the custos (chairperson). The opponent enters last.
2. The correct form of attire for all participants is black dress with long sleeves for ladies and tail coat for gentlemen (or, where appropriate, uniforms without decorations). Alternatively, if the doctoral candidate, custos and opponent so agree, formal suits may be worn. Where appropriate, the participants may wear a doctor's gown (with or without the relevant headdress). Participants holding Nordic doctorates are to carry their doctor's hat in their hand while entering and leaving the room; during the disputation the hat is placed on the table with the lyre facing the audience.
3. When all are seated, the custos opens the proceedings with the following words: "As custos appointed by the Faculty of Social Sciences, I open this doctoral disputation." All are seated with the exception of the doctoral candidate.
4. The doctoral candidate delivers the lectio praecursoria (the introductory lecture) standing. The lectio begins with the greeting: "Learned custos, my esteemed opponent, ladies and gentlemen...". The lectio may not exceed 20 minutes.
5. The correction of misprints is not part of the proceedings at the disputation. The doctoral candidate may provide the opponent with a written list of errors which the candidate herself or himself has identified, and this list may be appended to the opponent's statement which will be submitted to the Faculty.
6. On concluding the lectio praecursoria the doctoral candidate addresses the opponent with the following words: "Professor (or Doctor, etc.) NN, I respectfully ask you, as the opponent duly appointed by the Faculty of Social Sciences for my disputation, to present any criticism you may have against my doctoral dissertation."
7. The opponent then stands (as does the doctoral candidate) and delivers a short statement on 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 opponent and doctoral candidate take their seats.
8. When examining the dissertation, the opponent should begin by dealing with general and methodological questions, and then proceed to a detailed scrutiny of the text.
9. The examination takes usually 2-3 hours. If the examination takes a long time, the custos may announce an interval. The disputation may not last longer than six hours in total.
10. When the opponent's examination of the dissertation is over, the opponent stands and delivers a final statement, during which the doctoral candidate also stands.
11. The doctoral candidate remains standing and expresses her/his gratitude to the opponent for the discussion.



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12. Next, the doctoral candidate turns to the audience, and invites contributions as follows: "I now respectfully invite anyone in the audience who wishes to offer criticism against my dissertation to ask the custos for permission to speak."
13. The custos may then grant permission for the audience to speak, and is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral candidate can reply immediately to each question, and that the discussion does not stray from the matter in hand.
14. Finally the custos stands up and ends the proceeding with the words: "This disputation is now concluded."

COMPENSATION FOR EXAMINERS OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

The examiners and the opponent are paid by a fixed rate of compensation, i.e., no bill is required. If the opponent wishes compensation for travel expenses, an application should be made on the University's or the Government's official form for application of compensation of travel expenses. The expenses are paid as stated in the State's Traveling Regulations (www.vm.fi). It is kindly asked that the bill is presented (more detailed information: socpostgraduate@utu.fi) no later than within 45 days from the dissertation.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMINERS

The purpose of the examination is to ensure that the doctoral dissertation meets the set scientific and formal requirements before a permission to defend the thesis is granted to the doctoral candidate. The examiners are entitled to propose changes to the dissertation or even its rejection. Therefore, it is very important that the examination is performed carefully and that the faculty will receive explicit and unambiguous statements from the examiners. As per a ground rule set by the faculty, a statement concerning the granting of a permission to defend a dissertation may not be conditional but needs to explicitly state whether or not a permission for defence is recommended. An examiner may, however, present comments on the thesis work and suggestions for corrections in her/his statement.

The dissertation manuscript must be based on original scientific research. It may be a monograph or it may be based on a collection of related original publications by the candidate. The ultimate purpose of the examination is to make sure that the amount and the quality of the research and the contribution of the candidate fulfil the requirements for a doctoral degree. **The faculty expects that at least the following aspects of the dissertation are evaluated in a written statement by the examiner. The form of the statement is free.**

1. General impression of the doctoral dissertation

- brief overview of the scientific content and quality of the dissertation
- clarity of presentation

2. Topic and aims

- originality, timeliness and scientific relevance of the topic
- literature review of the same topic
- added value of the new data to existing knowledge

3. Data sets

- the candidate's original contribution to the collection of materials/study subjects and to the generation of results
- quality, quantity and suitability of the materials/study subjects

4. Methods and theoretical contribution

- complexity of the methodology
- development of any new methodology

5. Results and conclusions

- reliability and scientific significance of the new findings
- extent of reproduction or confirmation of earlier observations
- appropriateness of the analyses
- justification of the conclusions drawn from the original observations



6. Organization and presentation of dissertation

- organization of the dissertation and balance between the different parts
- quality of scientific style, presentation, language and graphics.

7. Previous studies related to topic

- scope and factual content of the literature review
- candidate's familiarity and critical mastery of the current literature
- adequacy and appropriateness of references

8. Maturity of discussion section of thesis

- relevance, factual accuracy, critical mastery and clarity of the discussion section of a thesis
- relationship between candidate's own results and existing information; evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of both
- formulation of synthesis of the entire dissertation project
- maturity of the candidate as a scientist

8. Summary

- brief description of the nature of the research
 - description of candidate's own contribution
 - most significant results and merits of the dissertation
 - quality of the thesis manuscript
 - major defects, if any, and measures taken to correct them
 - **statement on the suitability of the work for granting a permission for defence**

At the end of the statement, the examiner may present a summary: 1) brief description of the topic, 2) most significant results of the study and their contribution to the discipline, 3) qualification of the manuscript, 4) main shortcomings and possibilities to edit the work, 5) examiner needs to state whether he/she recommends a permission for the defence of dissertation.

The examiner must not recommend the permission, unless the examiner can accept the manuscript without reservations.