

# University of Turku

## Faculty of Medicine

### Doctoral training (Doctor of Medical Science, Doctor of Odontology, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Health Sciences)

#### Study guide 2022–2024

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# Doctoral training (Doctor of Medical Science / Doctor of Odontology / Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor of Health Sciences)

## STUDY GUIDE 2022–2024

### TO THE READER

This guide is intended to function as a handbook for students pursuing an academic postgraduate degree at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku during semesters 2022–2024. This guide also contains valuable information for others interested in doctoral training. This study guide covers the regulations issued by the Faculty and procedural guidelines, which guide the pursuing of a doctoral degree at the Faculty. Doctoral degrees pursued at the Faculty of Medicine are Doctor of Odontology, Doctor of Medical Science, Doctor of Health Sciences (nursing science) and Doctor of Philosophy (medical science or dental science).

Should there any essential changes to the regulations concerning postgraduate studies be made during the period of validity of this guide, they will be separately announced on the Faculty website.

The guide is available on the Faculty website:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/instructions-for-doctoral-studies-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/study-guides-for-doctoral-training>

## INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku offers the following academic postgraduate degrees

- Doctor of Health Sciences
- Doctor of Medical Science
- Doctor of Odontology
- Doctor of Philosophy

The regulations in this study guide are based on the Government decree on University Degrees (794/2004 and 1039/2013), the Universities Act (558/2009), University of Turku Regulation on Studies, and on the document "Principles of doctoral training at the University of Turku" which came into force on 1 August 2012.

## 1 Requirements for a doctoral degree

In order to be eligible for studies leading to an academic postgraduate degree, a person must have completed (Universities Act 558/2009, Section 37):

1. an applicable higher academic degree
2. an applicable higher polytechnic degree; or
3. an applicable degree completed abroad which in the awarding country gives eligibility for corresponding higher education.

The University may require a student admitted to study for an academic or artistic postgraduate degree to complete necessary supplementary studies in order to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for the studies. Additionally, the University may consider a person who has otherwise attained the required knowledge and skills to be eligible for the higher education here discussed.

Prerequisites for pursuing a doctoral degree are discussed in more detail in the electronic curricula of the Faculty of Medicine doctoral programmes:

<https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

The Faculty of Medicine doctoral programme (see chapter 4.1 and 4.2), to which the candidate for postgraduate studies applies, evaluates the candidate's skills for doctoral training gained in prior education.

## 2 Aims of doctoral training

The aims of postgraduate education described in the electronic curricula of the Faculty of Medicine doctoral programmes

<https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

### 3 Description of doctoral degree process

#### Applying for the right to study for a doctoral degree

- application periods for doctoral programmes
- an application contains:
  - study plan for doctoral studies
  - research plan including a funding plan
  - information on supervisor and supervision plan
  - information on follow-up committee for doctoral training
  - degree certificate (if applicable)
  - prove of proficiency in either Finnish or English (if applicable)
  - doctoral programme specific attachments



The Dean grants the right to study for doctoral degree



#### Registering as attending at the University

- when awarded a study right, doctoral researchers are registered as attending at the University of Turku
- doctoral researchers must register as attending each academic year



#### Pursuing doctoral studies and thesis work

- the follow-up committee for doctoral training convenes at the doctoral researcher's initiative at least once a year. The doctoral researcher's supervision plan is also updated at that time.
- a progress report is delivered annually to the doctoral programme



#### Approval of completed postgraduate studies

- the doctoral researcher delivers a summary, signed by their supervisor, of their postgraduate studies incl. appendices, for the approval of their doctoral programme
- the director of the doctoral programme approves the postgraduate studies (40 credits)
- the Dean approves the postgraduate studies entity to be included in the candidate's doctoral degree



#### Appointing preliminary examiners

- the completed thesis manuscript and the publications it contains are checked with the Turnitin-system and delivered (in PDF format) to the Faculty using an electronic form (instructions on UGIS portal)
- also the other form 'Proposal of people involved in the dissertation process' and instructions concerning the attachments can be found on UGIS portal: <http://ugis.utu.fi>
- the Head of the doctoral researcher's subject in doctoral training proposes (formally) the preliminary examiners, opponent and custos (chairperson of the defence)



#### Doctoral degree certificate

- the Dean issues a degree certificate when the doctoral thesis has been approved



#### Getting the doctoral thesis approved

- the Faculty Council approves the doctoral thesis
- Meeting times of the Faculty Council:  
<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/meeting-schedule>



#### Opponent's statement

- the opponent delivers their statement to the Faculty office within 1 month of the public defence



#### Public defence of the doctoral thesis

- the doctoral researcher books the premises for the defence and ensures travel and accommodation for the opponent (matkapalvelut@utu.fi), and takes care of other practical arrangements
- the doctoral researcher distributes copies of their thesis according instructions at least 10 days before the public defence



#### Permission to defend the doctoral thesis, opponent and custos

- Faculty Council grants permission to defend the doctoral thesis
- Dean appoints opponent and custos
- doctoral researcher contacts the University publication services and University Communications



#### Preliminary examiners' statements

- the experts deliver their statements to the Faculty office within 2 months of their appointment
- the doctoral researcher delivers the final version of the manuscript (and the publications it contains), which has been corrected in the preliminary examination, to the Faculty in PDF format
- based on the statements, the Doctoral Committee endorses a permission to defend the doctoral thesis, which the Faculty council then grants



#### Sending manuscript to preliminary examination

- the Doctoral Committee grants permission for preliminary examination
- the Dean/Vice dean appoints preliminary examiners
- the doctoral researcher delivers thesis manuscript to preliminary examiners

## 4 Regulations and practical instructions related to doctoral degrees

### 4.1 The University of Turku Graduate School and doctoral programmes at the Faculty

Doctoral researchers are a part of the University of Turku Graduate School (UTUGS) through the doctoral programmes of their own Faculties. ([www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs](http://www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs))

Applicants for doctoral training at the Faculty of Medicine apply to one of the Faculty doctoral programmes (<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-programmes-in-the-faculty-of-medicine>). Applicants choose which doctoral programme to apply to after negotiating with their supervisor. Each doctoral programme has a more specific electronic curriculum: <https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

### 4.2 Selection criteria and application procedure for doctoral training

To ensure high quality supervision of doctoral researchers, applicants for doctoral training at the Faculty of Medicine are primarily chosen to the fields of research of the institutions and doctoral programmes at the Faculty. In addition, aims of academic postgraduate education (chapter 2) and the resources required for doctoral training are taken into consideration.

For example, the following criteria are used when assessing an applicant's pre-existing skills and commitment to pursuing postgraduate studies successfully:

- quality of research plan: innovativeness of research topic, realism and clarity of research plan and method of implementation of planned study
- scientific and practical relevance of research topic
- success in undergraduate studies
- international orientation and language skills required for studies

The Faculty doctoral programme shall not only assess the applicant's skills and abilities to manage postgraduate studies, but also the sufficiency and expertise of the presented supervision, feasibility of the research plan, the suitability of the planned study to the doctoral programme, and whether the planned theoretical studies support the applicants' knowledge and skills. The doctoral programme may assess the applicant's aptitude and motivation by interviewing them. The maximum number of doctoral researchers selected may be predefined for each doctoral programme.

Doctoral researcher for degree programmes (*doctoral degree programmes in Medical Science, Odontology, Philosophy, or Health Sciences*) are selected within application periods.

The Faculty determines an applicant's eligibility and makes sure that the formal conditions for applying are met. The doctoral programme to which the applicant is applying assesses the applicant's pre-existing skills and commitment to pursuing postgraduate studies successfully. The doctoral programme either approves or rejects the applicant, and delivers information about their recommendation for processing by the Faculty Council.

For all degree programmes, the right to pursue a degree is granted by the decision of the Dean. The Dean approves the postgraduate study plan presented in the application to doctoral training, the research plan for doctoral thesis work, the supervision plan, the supervisor(s), and the members of the follow-up committee for doctoral training based on a proposal from the doctoral programme and the endorsement of the Doctoral Committee.

The right to study for doctoral degree is not granted if the applicant does not meet the selection criteria. In connection to the decision, the applicant is notified of the grounds for rejection. Appeal instructions are

included in the decision. The appeal procedure for student selection decisions is defined in the Universities Act (558/2009, Section 82).

The Faculty sends information about the decision to the applicant, and to the doctoral programme in question. Admission Services are also notified of a decision to grant the right to study for a doctoral degree.

### **4.3 Discussion with supervisor and initiation of thesis work**

A doctoral researcher beginning work on their doctoral degree must first discuss the contents of their postgraduate studies, supervision of their doctoral thesis work and other details related to the project with a senior researcher (professor, adjunct professor or, in exceptional cases, other researcher who has completed a doctoral degree). The doctoral researcher must agree on e.g., the topic, methodology and feasibility of the project with the supervisor and the professor or other head of the department in question.

A doctoral researcher may have 1–3 supervisors. All supervisors must have a doctoral degree. At least one of the supervisors must be an adjunct professor or possess a corresponding or higher academic qualification. According to Rector's decision, each doctoral researcher must be appointed at least two supervisors (Rector's decision in Finnish: [Supervision of doctoral candidates at the University of Turku](#)). Supervisor(s) must have knowledge of doctoral training at the University of Turku and access to University of Turku electronic systems. At least one supervisor must be employed by the University of Turku or a unit within the Turku University Hospital expert responsibility area (ERVVA). A retired researcher may not act as a sole supervisor, but must be joined by at least one additional supervisor. (For more information on professors emeriti in Finnish, please see University of Turku instructions on professors emeriti, [PDF on intranet](#)). Spouses, parents, siblings and their spouses, or children and their spouses cannot act as supervisors in doctoral training (see Administrative Procedure Act 434/2004, 23 §).

At the Faculty of Medicine, only one supervisor may be appointed for a doctoral researcher based on an application and for a valid reason (additional instruction to Rector's decision). When only one supervisor for doctoral training is proposed, the supervisor's justified plea for approval of only one supervisor must be attached to the application. When appointing only one supervisor, the regulations on supervision presented in the Faculty of Medicine study guide for doctoral training and the following additional criteria apply and must be present in the application:

- The supervisor's prior merits in supervision of doctoral researchers
- The supervisor must be able to dedicate a sufficient amount of time to supervision, and must possess sufficient knowledge of supervision practices at the University of Turku
- The supervisor must present a reasoning for why the thesis project in question is suited for supervision by only one supervisor
- The scope and methodology of the thesis project are such that supervision by only one supervisor is sufficient

Changes in supervision must get approved at the Faculty.

If changes in supervision are required after a doctoral researcher has been granted the right to study for a doctoral degree, the doctoral researcher and the supervisor(s) must apply for the change in writing, and submit the application containing an explanation for the reasons to the change to the Doctoral Committee. Possible changes must be applied for as soon as possible, and before the thesis manuscript is delivered to the Faculty at the latest.

For a legitimate reason, the Doctoral Committee may decide on removing a doctoral researcher's supervisor from their position, or on naming a new supervisor without the consent of all supervisors. In the case of prolonged conflict or problems in supervision, the Doctoral Committee may choose to terminate a supervisory relationship. In such a case, consent from the supervisor in question is not required. Prior to such measures, attempts must be made to solve any conflict or problem situations according to the process described in the supervision plan; in conflict or problem situations, doctoral researchers or supervisors are primarily instructed

to contact other members of the follow-up group, the doctoral programme (coordinator or director), or, if no solution can be reached, to bring the matter to the Doctoral Committee.

When it is time to apply for a doctoral researcher position at the Faculty, the applicant negotiates with their supervisor(s) on which doctoral programme to apply to. In cooperation with supervisor(s), the applicant prepares a supervision plan, which is attached to the application documents. The supervisor(s) and the doctoral researcher annually ensure that the plan is up to date, for example in connection to a follow-up committee meeting.

#### ***4.4 Follow-up committee for doctoral training and annual reporting***

After negotiating and in cooperation with their supervisor(s), an applicant to doctoral training assembles a follow-up committee. The follow-up committee consist of the doctoral researcher's supervisor(s), and one to three other researchers who have completed a doctoral degree and are familiar with the topic of the candidate's research. One of these other members must come from outside the doctoral researcher's own research group. The outside member of the follow-up committee cannot be a spouse, parent, sibling or their spouse, or a child or their spouse of either the supervisor(s) or the doctoral researcher.

The aim of the follow-up committee is to ensure the progress of the doctoral researcher's thesis work and studies, to provide an outside perspective to their research, and to support both the doctoral researcher and the supervisor(s) in possible conflict situations. Follow-up committee meetings improve the quality of doctoral training and provide doctoral researchers with experience in creating and maintaining networks and organising meetings.

The follow-up committee convenes once a year to evaluate the progress of the candidate's doctoral thesis work and postgraduate studies. The doctoral researcher convenes the meeting and provides the follow-up committee with a report on the progress of their research and postgraduate studies.

The aim of the follow-up committee is to promote the successful completion of thesis work by providing expertise on the topic and implementation of the research. If needed, changes to a doctoral researcher's study plan or research plan may be made based on discussions had with the follow-up committee.

Doctoral programmes monitor the implementation of supervision plans and follow-up committees via an annual report. Minutes on follow-up committee meetings drafted by the doctoral researcher are included in the report.

If required, the follow-up committee will issue a statement on the progress of a doctoral researcher's studies and thesis work.

Where expedient, one member of the follow-up committee, who is not a member of the doctoral researcher's research group and is not employed at or connected to the University of Turku may act as a preliminary examiner of the doctoral researcher's thesis manuscript, provided the member meets the criteria set for preliminary examiners.

A follow-up committee meeting may be convened at any point in the year. Career and development discussions may be had in connection to the meeting. Supporting career guidance material and a form by the University of Turku Graduate School are available here: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs/for-doctoral-candidate/career>. Doctoral researchers employed at the University of Turku may combine their follow-up committee meeting and development discussion. In the follow-up committee meeting, the doctoral researcher must be given opportunity to discuss their supervisory relationship confidentially with the follow-up committee members. In possible conflict or problem situations, the doctoral researcher may also contact members of the follow-up committee between meetings.

The nature of follow-up committee meetings changes as the doctoral researcher's studies and thesis work progress. In addition to following the progress of the doctoral researcher's thesis work, each follow-up committee meeting may have additional aims depending on e.g. the doctoral researcher's previous studies or progress.



- **Meeting 1** (early stages of thesis work): Appraising and, if necessary, updating the personal postgraduate study plan and research plan. Introducing the current state of the research project, plans for continuation, and the state of possible funding applications. Agreeing on future follow-up committee meeting schedule.
- **Meeting 2 and following meetings:** Monitoring the implementation of the postgraduate study plan and the progress of the research project (including careful inspection of results and findings). Evaluating the state of research funding and future funding possibilities. Discussing the doctoral researcher's career plans.
- **Finally:** Determining that the doctoral researcher's thesis project is complete and endorsing the starting of the preliminary examination process. The follow-up committee must confirm that the amount of work the doctoral researcher has contributed and their participation in the original publications is sufficient for delivering the thesis manuscript to preliminary examination. In addition, post-doctoral research funding or other career plans are discussed.

#### *Organising a follow-up committee meeting*

The doctoral researcher draws up a report on their progress and sends it to the members of the follow-up committee and to the supervisor(s) prior to the meeting. Members of the follow-up committee familiarise themselves with the report beforehand. All participants (doctoral researcher, supervisor(s), follow-up committee members) must participate in the meeting. In order to cut down on travel, the meeting may be organised via e.g. Teams.

#### *In the meeting*

- The doctoral researcher presents their thesis project and the current state of their postgraduate studies, as well as future plans (including publication plan).
- Follow-up committee members evaluate and comment on the research project and the progress thereof.
- The doctoral researcher's study attainments are checked. Follow-up committee members may recommend applicable training in order to ensure the doctoral researcher has sufficient knowledge and expertise in the field in question.
- The doctoral researcher is given the opportunity to have a brief (5–10 min) discussion with the members of the follow-up committee (not part of the research group) without the presence of their supervisor(s).

#### *After the meeting*

The doctoral researcher writes the meeting minutes, which are an obligatory part of the annual report to be made in January. The UGIS portal ([ugis.utu.fi](https://ugis.utu.fi)) may also be used in writing or archiving the minutes (see section Studies, Supervision and Follow-up Group / Advisory Committee Meetings). The doctoral researcher delivers the minutes to the members of the follow-up committee.

If the doctoral researcher has received their study right after 1.1.2013, they apply to have the studies they have completed during the year registered via the electronic form available on the UGIS portal (see left column, section Links).

#### *Additional information*

- Annual reporting: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs/for-doctoral-candidate>
- Active status of doctoral researchers: <https://www.utu.fi/en/study-at-utu/registration/passive/instructions-for-postgraduate-students>

## **4.5 Applying for the right to pursue a doctoral degree, right to study and registration with the university**

Doctoral researchers for the Faculty's doctoral programmes are selected during application periods defined by the University of Turku Graduate School. The Faculty publishes details regarding application.

The right to study for a doctoral degree and admission to a chosen doctoral programme is applied for on an application form, which contains the following:

- postgraduate study plan
- research plan for doctoral thesis, including a funding plan and a timetable plan
- information on the supervisor(s) and a supervision plan
- composition of the follow-up committee for doctoral training
- copy of relevant degree certificate (if the undergraduate or other qualifying degree has not been completed at the University of Turku)
- proof of proficiency in either Finnish or English (if applicable, for more information please see here: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs/how-to-apply/language>)
- doctoral programme specific attachments

Application forms and guidelines are available on the Faculty website:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/how-to-apply-for-doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine>

#### **4.5.1 Postgraduate study plan**

When applying for the right to study for a doctoral degree at the Faculty and for admission to a chosen doctoral programme, an applicant must have prepared a postgraduate study plan. Together with their supervisor, the doctoral researcher plans the contents of the postgraduate studies to be included in their doctoral degree, which must be suitable for the degree programme and discipline of the doctoral researcher.

The structure and scope of each degree programme at the Faculty of Medicine is separately presented in the electronic curricula of the doctoral programmes:

<https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

In cases where the Faculty of Medicine participates in a doctoral programme coordinated from another Faculty, the doctoral programme in question may in their curriculum set criteria for awarding credits for study attainments that differ from the criteria set by the Faculty of Medicine. However, degrees awarded by the Faculty of Medicine must meet the criteria for the scope of doctoral degrees as defined in the Faculty of Medicine curriculum, regardless of the doctoral programme the postgraduate studies have been carried out in.

Studies abroad, which may be included in a doctoral degree, are presented in chapter 4.6.3.

#### **4.5.2 Registration of a research plan for a doctoral thesis, supervisors, follow-up committee and subject in doctoral training, and indicating eligibility**

When applying for a right to study for a doctoral degree at the Faculty and acceptance into a doctoral programme, an applicant must have prepared a research plan for the doctoral thesis.

The supervisor(s) of an applicant's doctoral training are recorded in the application for a right to study for a doctoral degree, and provide written consent for the planned work (for information on the qualifications of supervisors, please see chapter 4.3). In cooperation with the supervisor(s), the applicant prepares a supervision plan, which is attached to the application documents. The composition of the follow-up committee for doctoral training is also recorded on the application (please see chapter 4.4).

In the application for a right to study for doctoral degree, the applicant states which doctoral subject the doctoral thesis research will be conducted in. A doctoral degree is registered to one doctoral subject, the head of which gives their written consent for carrying out doctoral thesis work within said doctoral subject.

The application for the right to study for a doctoral degree is complemented with a research plan in Finnish, Swedish or English. Doctoral programmes have separate guidelines for preparing a research plan; these can be found on the application instructions here:

If an applicant has not completed their qualifying degree at the University of Turku, a copy of the degree certificate and a transcript of study records must be included in the application for the right to study for a doctoral degree.

In addition, each doctoral programme may have specified questions or other documents required on the application.

### **4.5.3 Right to study for doctoral degree and registration with the University of Turku**

The decision on the right to study for a degree is delivered from the Faculty directly to Admission Services, where the new right to study for a doctoral degree and registration as an attending postgraduate student are recorded on the study register.

When the right to study for a doctoral degree has been recorded, Admission Services notify the doctoral researchers via e-mail. In the following years, doctoral researchers must register as attending at the University annually until the doctoral degree is completed. The registration is done online in the OILI registration service: <https://oili.csc.fi/?lang=en>. A doctoral researcher must be registered as attending at the University of Turku while completing studies for a doctoral degree, and when a degree certificate is issued. The registration period usually runs from the beginning of June until the end of August.

A doctoral researcher's right to study for a doctoral degree is declared passive if pursuing the doctoral degree has not progressed. The doctoral researcher annually delivers a doctoral programme specific progress report according to the guidelines of the doctoral programme. The progress of thesis work is evaluated on the report. The annual progress report contains a supervisor's opinion on the doctoral researcher's situation. The progress of Licentiate degrees is evaluated by the Faculty. The right to study for a degree is declared passive at the end of the academic year (July 31<sup>st</sup>).

To activate a passive right to study for a doctoral degree, one has to deliver a feasible plan according to the instructions of the doctoral programme and the Faculty. The decision on the reactivation of the study right is made by that Faculty which has originally granted the study right.

Registration with the University is free of charge for doctoral researchers, unless they wish to join the Student Union, which offers some social benefits for its members. For more detailed information on registration, please contact Admission Services, tel. +358 29 450 4300 or email: [disco@utu.fi](mailto:disco@utu.fi).

Instructions for registration for the academic year are sent to enrolled students in May. The instructions are only sent by email, and only to University email addresses (utu.fi). The registration instructions can be found online: <https://www.utu.fi/en/study-at-utu/registration>

### **4.5.4 Completion of a doctoral degree**

A doctoral degree cannot be completed entirely remotely, i.e. by being absent. The public defence of the doctoral thesis is by default held at the University of Turku. Completing a doctoral degree requires sufficient presence at the university providing the education and research, meaning that as a rule a doctoral researcher should be present at the University of Turku for at least one semester.

## **4.6 Postgraduate studies**

At the Faculty of Medicine, the scope of the postgraduate studies required for a doctoral degree is 40 ECTS credits from 1 August 2018 onwards.

**To ensure doctoral degrees are completed systematically and in a timely manner, doctoral researchers must complete their doctoral studies before the completion of their doctoral thesis work.**

Postgraduate studies may be attained prior to the completion of a qualifying degree. Undergraduate students planning on completing a doctoral degree may apply to either the Clinical or the Molecular Medicine Research Track while pursuing a licentiate degree in Medicine or in Odontology. An undergraduate student in Health Sciences planning to complete a doctoral degree may complete the Researcher Path in Nursing Science. For more information on the Research tracks and path, please see here:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research-tracks-at-the-faculty-of-medicine>

Studies abroad may be included in the postgraduate studies. See chapter 4.6.3 Studies abroad included in a doctoral degree.

#### **4.6.1 Structure and scope of a doctoral degree in Medical Science, Odontology and Philosophy**

Completing a doctoral degree in Medical Science, Odontology and Philosophy requires on average four years of full-time studies. The doctoral degree (240 credits) consists of a doctoral thesis of 200 credits, which is publicly defended, and 40 credits of postgraduate studies.

The structure and scope of a doctoral degree are presented in the electronic curricula of the doctoral programmes: <https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

In connection to approving a postgraduate study plan, the supervisor(s) (primarily) and the doctoral programme ensure that the studies form a balanced entity that fulfils the decreed aims of a doctoral degree. If the doctoral researcher has already completed a postgraduate degree, the Faculty decides on replacing or complementing the postgraduate studies based on a proposal from the doctoral programme and an endorsement from the Doctoral Committee, in connection to approving the study plan. The final decision on the approval is made by the Faculty. For more information on the postgraduate study plan, see chapter 4.5

#### **4.6.2 Structure and scope of a doctoral degree in Health Sciences**

A doctoral degree in Health Sciences requires on average four years of full-time studies. A doctoral degree in Health Sciences (240 credits) consists of a doctoral thesis of 200 credits, which is publicly defended, and 40 credits of postgraduate studies.

The structure and scope of a doctoral degree in Health Sciences and the studies required are presented in the electronic curriculum of the Doctoral Programme in Nursing Science:

<https://opas.peppi.utu.fi/en/postgraduate-studies/14003>

Study attainments which are in accordance with a doctoral researcher's postgraduate study plan are recorded in the study register. If there are changes in the study plan, the changes and the completed studies deviating from the plan must be approved by the director of the doctoral programme. For more information on the postgraduate study plan, see chapter 4.5.

#### **4.6.3 Studies abroad included in a doctoral degree**

One of the aims of doctoral training is to provide a readiness to work in the international research community. Studies supporting internationalisation that may be included in a doctoral degree are, for example, participating in international conferences, scientific work at a foreign research institute, courses completed abroad and guest lectures and international courses arranged at the home university.

Information on research abroad and funding: <https://intranet.utu.fi/en/unit/utugs/funding-and-collaboration>

Credits attained abroad in student exchange may be transferred to a doctoral degree. Doctoral researchers are advised to contact the coordinator of their doctoral programme before their exchange period to ensure the attainments may be included in their degree

Student exchange positions are published in January and the application period ends in the middle of February. However, there are a very limited number of exchange positions at the postgraduate level. More information about the student exchange places can be found here: <https://intranet.utu.fi/index/applying-for-exchange/Pages/default.aspx> or from the International office (outgoing@utu.fi).

Doctoral researchers are actively encouraged to make use of the established international contacts of the departments, institutions and research projects. Studies completed through these contacts or during an independently acquired exchange placement may also be included in a doctoral degree. The International office should be notified of an independently acquired exchange (international@utu.fi) in order to get the mobility period added to the study register.

#### **4.6.4 Getting the doctoral studies (40 credits) approved**

Study attainments are recorded on the study register. Course participation is monitored. Only attended sessions are recorded on the study register. Course attainments at the Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Education Unit (PGE) are registered at the Faculty. Separate proof is required for registration of studies other than course form, e.g. with programmes or poster booklets for congresses. A maximum of 50 credits of studies may be included in a doctoral degree.

Those who have been granted the right to pursue a doctoral degree from 1 January 2013 onwards ***in Medical Science, Odontology, Philosophy or Health Sciences*** may get study attainments approved prior to the completion of their postgraduate studies entity with an electronic form, according to instructions on the UGIS portal: <https://ugis.utu.fi/>

After having completed all postgraduate studies, a doctoral researcher pursuing a ***doctoral degree in Medical Science, Odontology, Philosophy or Health Sciences*** fills in an application for getting the doctoral studies approved, containing a specified summary of the studies. A transcript of studies and possible course and training certificates should be appended. The doctoral researcher and their supervisor sign the application. The director of the doctoral programme checks the studies and delivers their approval to the Faculty.

Applications of approval of doctoral studies for doctoral degree:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/postgraduate-studies-at-the-faculty-of-medicine>

The Dean decides on approval of postgraduate studies in a doctoral degree.

**NB!** The postgraduate studies in a doctoral degree must be approved by the Faculty before the preliminary examination process of a doctoral thesis manuscript is initiated.

### **4.7 Writing a doctoral thesis**

#### **4.7.1 General guidelines for a doctoral thesis**

A finalised thesis meant as a doctoral thesis must be based on independent scientific research, and form a sufficiently broad scientific presentation of a subject in the doctoral researcher's field. The University of Turku Graduate School recommends that completing a doctoral degree should equal, on average, four years of full-time work. The extent of doctoral theses is evaluated based on this guideline.

A doctoral thesis can be a monograph thesis, or a compilation thesis, i.e. a collection of scientific publications and manuscripts on a unitary subject matter, and a summary related to them. In addition to the original publications, the summary part of a compilation thesis may contain previously unpublished material.

The scope of the 'Review of literature' part of the thesis must indicate that the doctoral researcher defending the thesis has acquired sufficient knowledge of their own research field and other related fields of science.

This means that the review of literature must present the scientific background of the thesis work in a manner that helps the reader situate the thesis in the wider scope of science.

The part 'Materials and methods' has to be a text-form description of the materials and methods used in the thesis work, with appropriate references. A plain list of methods without sentence structure is not acceptable. The text should form an entity that can be read independently, as the original publications will not be published with the electronically published version of the thesis.

In the 'Discussion' part, the obtained research results must be discussed in relation to the results in the literature. The strengths and weaknesses of the obtained results in relation to the topic of the thesis should also be discussed. In the last part of the 'Discussion', conclusions should be drawn based on the results obtained; these conclusions should be objective and realistic in relation to the results.

The originality of doctoral thesis manuscripts delivered to the Faculty for preliminary examination must be checked with the Turnitin-system. A certificate stating that the manuscript has been checked with the Turnitin-system signed by a supervisor must be delivered to the Faculty. The following text must be added to the reverse side of the doctoral thesis cover: "The originality of this dissertation has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service".

A doctoral thesis must be written in either Finnish, Swedish or English. The Faculty Council may request a separate statement on the spelling and grammar of a manuscript. The original research results affiliated with a doctoral thesis must be stored for at least as long as the Faculty processes the doctoral thesis. If needed, the doctoral researcher must be able to present the results to experts appointed by the Faculty.

### **Compilation thesis**

When granting permission to defend a doctoral thesis, half of the original publications included must be published or vetted for publication in peer reviewed series or journals by the time that the thesis manuscript is delivered to the Faculty for the initiation of the preliminary examination process. One of the publications may be a systematic review article in proper format, or a similar review that provides new information. A review must be comparable to an original publication. Additionally, it is possible to include another review article in a doctoral thesis, if it is justifiable and there are more than four original publications.

As a rule, a publication drawn up based on the contents of a conference (proceedings) is not accepted as one of the original publications of a doctoral thesis.

A publication manuscript not yet published must be of a scope and structure sufficient for publishing in a peer reviewed series or journal.

Faculty instructions on Open access publishing must be followed:

[www.utu.fi/sites/default/files/media/med\\_open\\_access\\_julkaiseminen.pdf](http://www.utu.fi/sites/default/files/media/med_open_access_julkaiseminen.pdf)

Regarding co-authored publications, it is important that the doctoral researcher has had an independent role in the completion of all original publications included in their thesis. In at least one of the publications, the doctoral researcher must be the only first author. The doctoral researcher must give a written clarification in English about their role in realising each of the publications a compilation dissertation is composed of. The first author of a publication has the exclusive right to use the publication in their doctoral thesis. If another author wants to use the publication in question in their doctoral thesis, the first author and, when the first author is a doctoral researcher, the supervisor(s) of the work must give their written consent. If an unpublished manuscript of a publication is included in the thesis, written consent from all authors is required. The number of publications used in more than one doctoral thesis may not exceed half of the total number of publications in the doctoral thesis of any doctoral researcher. The same publication may be used in two doctoral theses at the most. The question of including the same co-authored publication in two different doctoral researchers' theses is solved case-by-case based on an English-language clarification on the authors' distribution of work when assessing the doctoral thesis work. The previously mentioned clarifications and consents are supplied to the Faculty when initiating the preliminary examination process of a thesis manuscript.

## Monograph thesis

A monograph thesis is a consistent scientific presentation by one author based on self-contained research. Previously published work cannot be accepted as a monograph thesis. However, the author may publish some articles on the same topic as the thesis before completion of the thesis, to which they can refer in the actual doctoral thesis.

### 4.7.2 On the format and contents of a doctoral thesis

Doctoral theses are usually published in the *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* –series, in which case the *Annales Word* template is used. The template, which contains all layout settings, aids in ensuring the layout and form of doctoral theses are correct. At the Faculty of Medicine, the template contains e.g. the order of the content, the correct fonts, and the correct margin settings. For the template and *Annales*-series cover models please see here: <https://utuguides.fi/c.php?g=657189&p=4624107>

The following must be included in a doctoral thesis, in the given order:

- title page with thesis title and the first and last name of the author, as well as the following text on the lower edge: Turun yliopiston julkaisu – *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* (if the thesis will be published in the *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* –series)
- reverse side of the title page, which mentions the following in the order given here:
  - University of Turku, Faculty of Medicine, (department,) the doctoral subject where the doctoral degree is registered, other possible subjects where thesis work was performed, and doctoral programme
  - other possible places where thesis work was performed
  - name(s) of supervisor(s)
  - names of preliminary examiners
  - name of the opponent
  - Note that the originality of the doctoral thesis has been checked (The originality of this dissertation has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.)
  - name of the photographer/drawer of a possible cover image
  - identifiers of the series of publication (serial number, ISBN-number and ISSN-number) and the place and year of printing
- The first item of content in a thesis is an abstract in the language in which the thesis is written. In English language theses, the order of the two abstracts required is English–Finnish.
  - abstract in English (one page in length). At the beginning of this abstract, the places where thesis work has been conducted are marked as explained above, the name of the author, the thesis title, the month and year of printing/releasing the thesis. At the end of the page, the keywords related to the doctoral thesis are marked.
  - abstract in Finnish (one page in length, form as above)
  - an abstract in an additional language may also be included (form as above)
- table of contents with numbered chapters and pages
- abbreviations
- list of original publications, which must mention the copyrights of the original publications (e.g.: The original publications have been reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders).
- introduction (the numbering of chapters begins from this introductory chapter)
- review of the literature
- aims
- materials and methods
- results
- discussion
- summary/conclusions

- acknowledgements (Contents of the chapter “Acknowledgements” are added after the preliminary examination process)
- references
- all original publications should be included at the end of a compilation dissertation in the order listed in the doctoral thesis

In addition, a so called loose leaf with the following information in the language the thesis has been written in should be added as the first page of the doctoral thesis:

- name of the doctoral thesis
- name of the doctoral researcher
- the phrase “ACADEMIC DISSERTATION”
- note on permission to defend: “To be presented, with the permission of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Turku, for public examination”
- date and place of the public defence
- Annales-series information or “Turun yliopisto – University of Turku”, place and year of printing

If the doctoral researcher wishes, they may include a short free-form introduction of themselves and their picture in the doctoral thesis.

The supervisor ensures that a doctoral researcher not fluent in Finnish has the possibility to produce a Finnish language abstract (tiivistelmä). If identifying the translator is deemed necessary, the phrase “translated by” is recommended.

It is recommended to give literature references after quotations in brackets showing the author’s last name and the publishing year. When there are several authors “et al” should be added after the first author. Alphabetical order is preferred in the list of references (bibliography).

In all English-language release notes written at the University, the name of the University should be indicated in the form ”University of Turku” whereas “Turku University Hospital” should be in this form.

In a compilation dissertation, when it comes to material published earlier, valid copyright regulations must be followed (this can also apply to the reuse of figures or tables in the text of the summary part). **If figures or tables printed in the original publications have been copied to the summary part of the doctoral thesis, the captions must have references to the publications.** The source of figures made by the author must be stated as well, e.g. with the phrase ”Author’s own drawing.”. **Reusing figures printed in a publication in the summary part of a doctoral thesis is not recommended.**

The doctoral researcher must report any parts contained in a monograph doctoral thesis that have been previously published. The source of figures made by the author must be stated as well, e.g. with the phrase ”Author’s own drawing.”.



## **4.8 Beginning the preliminary examination process**

**The postgraduate studies entity must be approved by the Faculty before a doctoral thesis manuscript is delivered to the Faculty for preliminary examination.**

To initiate the preliminary examination process, a doctoral researcher delivers their doctoral thesis manuscript and appendices to the Faculty. The preliminary examination process is initiated on the UGIS portal according to instructions there (<https://ugis.utu.fi/>). In addition to the manuscript, the process consists of two electronic forms with their attachments. Doctoral researchers fill a form on which the head of the doctoral subject proposes at least two preliminary examiners for the doctoral thesis manuscript. It is recommended that at least one preliminary examiner be from Finland. **Monography doctoral theses are always appointed three preliminary examiners.** If a doctoral researcher does not accept the proposed experts (preliminary examiners or opponent), they attach their differing statement to the form. A proposal on the opponent and custos can be made at this stage, or when the preliminary examiners have given their statements. The competency and possible bias of preliminary examiners and the opponent are discussed in chapter 4.8.1.

The signatures of all registered supervisors are supplied as an attachment to the form. Consent for initiating the preliminary examination process and a mutual view on the readiness of the thesis manuscript for reviewing is confirmed with the signatures.

One of the required attachments is a recommendation from the follow-up committee. The follow-up committee confirms that the amount of work the doctoral researcher has completed and the doctoral researcher's personal contribution to the original publications are sufficient for initiating the preliminary examination process. All members of the follow-up committee must sign the recommendation.

The doctoral researcher must give a written clarification in the language of their doctoral thesis (Finnish, English, or Swedish) about their role in the completion of each of the original publications that form a compilation thesis. This clarification includes a list of the original publications and a description of the doctoral researcher's role in each of the publications. The clarification is signed by the doctoral researcher and their supervisor(s). The clarification is one of the attachments required to initiate the preliminary examination process. The clarification is also delivered to the preliminary examiners by the Faculty.

The first author of a publication has the exclusive right to use the publication in their doctoral thesis. If another author wants to use the publication in question in their doctoral thesis, the first author and, when the first author is a doctoral researcher, the supervisor(s) of the work must give their written consent. This written consent is one of the attachments required for initiating the preliminary examination process.

For a justified reason, one publication may be used in two doctoral theses maximum. In such a case, both doctoral researchers and their supervisors must make a written, justified clarification in the language of their doctoral thesis (Finnish, English, or Swedish) to the Faculty demonstrating both authors' independent contribution to the publication. This clarification is one of the attachments required for initiating the preliminary examination process. Additionally, the previously published doctoral thesis in question must be delivered to the faculty (2 copies), so that it may be delivered to preliminary examiners. The number of publications used in more than one doctoral thesis may not exceed half of the total number of publications in a doctoral thesis. The question of including the same co-authored publication in two different doctoral researchers' doctoral theses is solved case-by-case based on the clarification concerning the authors' distribution of work when assessing the doctoral thesis work.

If an unpublished article is included in the thesis, written consent from all authors is included in the attachments for required for the initiating the preliminary examination process.

When granting permission to defend, half of the original publications in a compilation thesis must be published or vetted for publication.

## List of all appended material required to initiate the preliminary examination process:

**a) Electronic form ‘Send in your thesis manuscript and attachments’**, to which is attached a PDF copy of the doctoral thesis manuscript in final form, including a table of contents and prints or manuscripts of original publications (for more instructions on delivering the thesis manuscript, please see <https://ugis.utu.fi/>)

**Other attachments to the form** (instructions on the submission on: <https://ugis.utu.fi/>):

- **Clarification of the doctoral researcher’s contribution to each of the original publications** (obligatory in a compilation thesis) The doctoral researcher provides an explanation in the language of the doctoral thesis regarding their contribution to each of the original publications. The clarification is signed by the doctoral researcher and their supervisor(s). The clarification is also delivered to the preliminary examiners by the Faculty.
- **Explanation regarding the use of original publication(s) in two theses** (conditional) For a justified reason, one publication may be used in two doctoral theses maximum. In such a case, both doctoral researchers and their supervisors must make a written, justified clarification (in the language of the doctoral thesis or in English) to the Faculty demonstrating both authors’ independent contribution to the publication. This clarification is one of the attachments required for initiating the preliminary examination process. Additionally, the previously published doctoral thesis in question including articles must be delivered to the faculty, so that it may be delivered to preliminary examiners.
- **Permission from the first author** (conditional) The first author of a publication has the exclusive right to use the publication in their doctoral thesis. If another author wants to use the publication in question in their doctoral thesis, the first author and, when the first author is a doctoral researcher, the supervisor(s) of the work must give their written consent. This written consent is one of the attachments required for initiating the preliminary examination process.
- **Permission to use an unpublished article in a doctoral thesis** (conditional) If an unpublished article is included in the thesis, written consent from all authors is required
- **Recommendation of the follow-up committee** (obligatory) The follow-up committee confirms that the amount of work the doctoral researcher has completed and the doctoral researcher’s personal contribution to the original publications is sufficient for beginning the preliminary examination process. All members of the follow-up committee [except the supervisor(s)] must sign the recommendation.
- **Clarification of pictures and tables of the thesis manuscript** (obligatory) List of pictures and tables with clarification on whether they are
  - a citation (a reference to the original work is required)
  - doctoral researcher’s own illustration (a reference to writer’s own original publication is required)
  - a modified picture or table (with e.g. text “Modified from...”; a reference to original work is required)
  - The licence to use the picture/table must be indicated.

**b) Electronic form ‘Proposal of people involved in the dissertation process’**, i.e. preliminary examiners of the doctoral thesis, the opponent and custos. A proposal of the opponent and custos may also be made later, but it must be delivered by latest on the same “Documents for the Doctoral Committee at the latest” day on which the doctoral thesis manuscript is delivered again to the Faculty at the end of the preliminary examination process. (instructions on submission on: <https://ugis.utu.fi/>)

**Attachments to the form** (instructions on the submission on: <https://ugis.utu.fi/>):

- **Consent of all registered supervisors to begin the thesis preliminary examination process** (obligatory)
- **Turnitin statement signed by supervisor** (obligatory)

Based on a proposal from the Doctoral Committee, the Dean approves the sending of a doctoral thesis to preliminary examiners. Upon receiving information about the approval decision, the doctoral researcher delivers their doctoral thesis manuscript, including original publications, to the preliminary examiners. The Faculty sends the preliminary examiners a letter containing instructions and further clarifications as

mentioned above. The doctoral researcher and the preliminary examiners discuss the corrections and changes that must be made to the manuscript.

#### **4.8.1 Preliminary examiners of a doctoral thesis, opponent and custos**

Based on proposals made, the Doctoral Committee names at least two preliminary examiners for each doctoral thesis manuscript (instructions for preliminary examiners in chapter 4.8.2). Monograph doctoral theses always have three preliminary examiners. The preliminary examiners must propose corrections or give their statement within two months of being appointed by the Faculty.

For the public examination of a doctoral thesis, the Faculty typically appoints one official opponent as well as a custos, who serves as chair and custodian of the public defence. The custos is usually the professor of the doctoral researcher's department.

The preliminary examiners and the opponent must have completed a doctoral degree, and they should be adjunct professors or have equivalent scientific merits. They must be external to the thesis project, they must not have co-authored publications with the author of the doctoral thesis, they must come from outside the University of Turku, and they must not have close and recent (as rule, within the past three years) scientific collaboration with the supervisor(s). A person who has retired from the University of Turku or from a unit within the Turku University Hospital expert responsibility area (ERVA) cannot act as a preliminary examiner or opponent to a doctoral thesis made at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku. One of the preliminary examiners or the opponent may be an adjunct professor at the University of Turku, if their regular post is elsewhere. A preliminary examiner of a doctoral thesis or the opponent must not be associated with the author of the thesis as described in Section 28 of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), nor must they be in such dispute or other relationship, which obviously compromises their impartiality. If a member of the Faculty Council or Doctoral Committee is in a relationship of the kind mentioned above with the doctoral researcher, the member must not participate in the processing matters related to the doctoral researcher.

The opponent must give a justified, written statement on the doctoral thesis, based on which the Faculty Council decides on accepting the thesis. The doctoral thesis is graded as "accepted with distinction", "accepted" or "rejected". Based on proposals from the experts (opponent, preliminary examiners), an exceptionally meritorious doctoral thesis may be accepted with distinction. The rules for accepting doctoral theses with distinction are presented in Chapter 4.10.5.

Prior to the appointing of preliminary examiners and the opponent, a doctoral researcher has the opportunity to give a statement on the matter. In a matter concerning the grading of a doctoral thesis, the doctoral researcher is given the opportunity to give a written response to the statements of preliminary examiners or the opponent before the matter is solved (University Act 558/2009, 44§).

#### **4.8.2 Instructions for the preliminary examiners of a doctoral thesis**

Instructions for the preliminary examiners of a doctoral thesis are sent by the Faculty when the Doctoral Committee has in its meeting processed the doctoral thesis manuscript for the first time, approved it for preliminary examination, and proposed to the Dean the appointing of the preliminary examiners suggested in the application for permission to defend.

The purpose of preliminary examination is to ensure that doctoral theses meet the set scientific and formal requirements before permission is granted for a doctoral researcher to defend their thesis. Examiners are entitled to propose changes to, or even rejection of, a dissertation. Therefore, it is extremely important that examination be performed carefully and that the Faculty obtain explicit and unambiguous statements from examiners.

A doctoral thesis manuscript must be based on original scientific research. The manuscript may be a monograph or based on a collection of related original publications by the candidate. Examination aims at ensuring that the amount and quality of research, and the contribution of the candidate fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree. **Examiners are asked to provide a written statement and to fill in the attached**

**appendix form.** The Faculty expects that at least the following aspects of the thesis manuscript be evaluated in a written statement by the examiner. The form of the statement is free.

### **1. General notes on the doctoral dissertation**

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

### **2. Topic and aims**

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

### **3. Materials and methods**

- the candidate's original contribution to the collection of materials or studied subjects, and to the generation of results
- quality, quantity and suitability of the materials or studied subjects
- complexity of the methodology
- appropriateness of controls
- development of any new methodology

### **4. Results and conclusions**

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

### **5. Organization and presentation of dissertation**

- organization of the dissertation and balance between sections
- quality of scientific style, presentation, language and graphics

### **6. Literature review**

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

### **7. Maturity of discussion section**

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

### **8. Summary**

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

Examiners must discuss any minor defects and errors in a thesis manuscript with the doctoral researcher, request revisions be made, and approve the final version. This must be done **before** an examiner submits

their statement to the Faculty. If there are fundamental defects (e.g. related to the candidate's own contribution, reliability of methods), a statement should be sent to the Faculty complete with a recommendation of not granting permission to the doctoral researcher to defend their thesis. **An examiner must not recommend permission for the doctoral researcher to publicly defend their thesis unless they can approve the final, corrected manuscript without reservations.** If a doctoral thesis is of exceptionally high quality, an examiner may suggest approval with distinction. The basis for awarding distinction must be included in the appendix form of the examiner's statement. The doctoral thesis is graded as "accepted with distinction", "accepted" or "rejected". Distinction may be awarded to a doctoral thesis of exceptional merit on the basis of recommendations by the opponent and the examiners. Chapter 4.10.5 presents the rules for accepting the faculty's doctoral theses with distinctions. The Faculty requests that examiners return their statements within 2 months of receiving their invitation.

#### ***4.9 Granting permission to defend a doctoral thesis***

The doctoral researcher makes corrections to their thesis manuscript based on negotiations with the preliminary examiners. When the Faculty has received endorsing statements from the preliminary examiners, the doctoral researcher delivers the corrected manuscript as a PDF-file to the Faculty, and enters the intended date of their public defence on the UGIS portal. The statements of the preliminary examiners will be delivered to the doctoral researcher. In a matter concerning the grading of a doctoral thesis, the doctoral researcher is given the opportunity to give a written response to the statements of the preliminary examiners before the matter is solved (University Act 558/2009, 44§). A proposal on the opponent and/or custos must be made at this stage, if one has not already been made simultaneously with proposing the preliminary examiners.

Prior to the meeting of the Faculty Council, the Doctoral Committee checks that the manuscript is ready for printing and that the preliminary examiners accept the work without reservations. The Faculty Council decides on granting permission to defend the thesis based on the preliminary examiners' statements and on the proposal of the Doctoral Committee.

A doctoral thesis manuscript can be printed as soon as the Faculty Council has granted permission to defend it. **The doctoral researcher delivers their published doctoral thesis to the opponent.** The Faculty sends the opponent a letter and instructions.

##### **4.9.1 Publishing and printing a doctoral thesis**

A doctoral thesis may be published in the University of Turku series *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis*, or in another academic series. A doctoral thesis may also be self-published, or published by a commercial publisher. More information and instructions for publishing a doctoral thesis can be found on the University website here: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines> (see section 'Publishing and printing doctoral dissertation').

The doctoral researcher is responsible for the publishing and printing of their thesis. The minimum number of printed copies of a doctoral thesis is specified here: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

##### **4.9.2 Distribution and release of a doctoral thesis**

A doctoral thesis must be released no later than 10 days before the agreed public defence by 12 pm. A doctoral thesis published online should be submitted to the main library of the University of Turku as a PDF-file ready for publishing no later than 15 days before the defence. The file can be delivered by email to [julkaisut@utu.fi](mailto:julkaisut@utu.fi). Instructions on distribution and release of the doctoral thesis: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

#### ***4.10 Public defence of a doctoral thesis***

Prior to the public defence of a doctoral thesis, the doctoral researcher must make a number of practical arrangements. The doctoral researcher is responsible for practical arrangements of the public defence of a

doctoral thesis, of the travel and accommodation arrangements of the opponent, and of possible festivities. For more instructions, please see the University website:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

#### **4.10.1 Reserving the date and venue for the public defence, and organising the opponent's travel and accommodation arrangements**

The public defence of a doctoral thesis must be held within six (6) months of when the Faculty grants permission to defend the thesis. For justified reason, the doctoral researcher may apply for extended time from the Doctoral Committee. The doctoral researcher reserves a lecture hall after having settled the date of the defence with the opponent and the custos (chairperson of the public defence). The defence usually starts at 12:00 noon, but it is also possible to start the defence at another time. The Faculty of Medicine may have several public defences on the same day. It is requested that defences held on the same day be scheduled to start at different times so all interested parties have the opportunity to attend. As a rule, two defences of the same institution should not be organised at the same time. It is also recommended that public defences not be organised during general holiday seasons. For more instructions on reserving University venues for public defence, please see here: <https://intranet.utu.fi/index/Booking-Seminar-Rooms-Lecture-Halls/Pages/default.aspx>

The doctoral researcher (or custos/supervisor/representative of doctoral subject) book the opponent's travel and accommodation with the help of the University's Travel Services ([travelservices@utu.fi](mailto:travelservices@utu.fi)).

**NB!** The Faculty will reimburse a maximum of 2 nights of the opponent's accommodation. With foreign opponents (arriving from abroad), the Faculty will cover up to 500 euros worth of travel and accommodation expenses. The doctoral researcher should make sure that there is a cost centre available for further expenses (see chapter 5.3.2).

#### **4.10.2 Announcing the public defence of a doctoral thesis**

When the Faculty Council has granted a doctoral researcher permission to defend their thesis, and when the Dean has appointed the opponent and custos, the doctoral researcher will be informed of the Faculty's decision.

Once the permission to defend the doctoral dissertation has been granted by the Faculty, the doctoral researcher fills in and sends an announcement of the public defence of a doctoral thesis to University Communications. Additionally, the doctoral researcher writes a press release draft (less than one page) for the Finnish press release, and sends the draft and a photograph of themselves to University Communications approximately three (3) weeks before the public defence.

For the announcement of the public defence of a doctoral thesis and instructions on press releases, please see here: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines> (section 'Press release')

#### **4.10.3 Proceedings at the public defence of a doctoral thesis**

The public defence of a doctoral thesis must be carried out in Finnish, in the language the thesis has been written in, or in another language approved by the Faculty. If the doctoral researcher speaks Finnish it is customary to hold the *Lectio praecursoria* in Finnish even if the rest of the defence is held in another language. Please see further instructions on the University website:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines> (see section 'Dissertation defence')

##### **Proceedings**

1. When the participants of the public defence enter the room, the defending doctoral researcher 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 researcher,

custos and opponent so agree, formal suits may be worn. Where appropriate, 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 public defence 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..., I open this doctoral public defence." The doctoral researcher remains standing.

4. The doctoral researcher 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. Correction of misprints is not part of the proceedings at the public defence. The doctoral researcher may provide the opponent with a written list of errors the candidate has identified, and this list may be appended to the opponent's statement submitted to the Faculty.

6. On concluding the *lectio praecursoria*, the doctoral researcher 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... for my public defence, to present any criticism you may have against my doctoral dissertation."

7. The opponent stands (as does the doctoral researcher) 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 researcher are seated.

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. Examination usually takes 2–3 hours. If the examination is lengthy, the custos may announce an interval. The public defence 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 researcher also stands.

11. The doctoral researcher remains standing and expresses their gratitude to the opponent for the discussion.

12. Next, the doctoral researcher 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 researcher can reply immediately to each question, and that the discussion does not stray from the matter at hand.

14. Finally, the custos stands up and ends the proceeding with the words: "This public defence is now concluded"

#### **4.10.4 Instructions for the official opponent's statement**

The Faculty sends the opponent instructions on the opponent's statement after the Dean has appointed the opponent and the doctoral researcher has been granted permission to defend their doctoral thesis.

The opponent's statement consists of an evaluation of the doctoral thesis and its public defence. The statement constitutes the final basis for the Faculty Council's decision on accepting or rejecting the doctoral thesis. Thus, it is important that the opponent clearly states: 1) any defects of the thesis, 2) the merits of the thesis, 3) a clear stance on whether the thesis should be approved or not.

The opponent's statement may be free form, but it should include the same points that are mentioned in the instructions concerning examiners' statements (chapter 4.8.2) where applicable. Additionally, the opponent's statement should include a brief description and evaluation of the public defence of the doctoral thesis and any contributions of the other participants at the public defence.

The opponent's statement should ideally end with a summary commenting on the originality of the research subject and clearly stating whether the topic is relevant, is handled in a way that meets scientific criteria, and whether the doctoral thesis, in general, is original and comprehensive. Attention should be paid to whether the research verifies previously obtained results, complements previously made but unconnected and uncertain observations, or includes new and essential information in the field of study. Special mention should be made of whether the doctoral thesis includes observations and conclusions that are crucially important to the field of research in question. If the opponent so wishes, the statement may indicate that the thesis should be accepted with distinction. The basis of distinction should be included in the statement. For doctoral theses of exceptionally high quality, distinction may be awarded based on the recommendations of examiners and the opponent. The Faculty requests that the opponent returns their statement to the Faculty within 1 month after the public defence of a doctoral thesis.

#### **4.10.5 Rules ratified by the Faculty Council for accepting doctoral theses with distinction at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Turku**

1) Distinction may be awarded to approximately 10% of all doctoral theses approved by the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku in any given calendar year.

2) A thesis may be awarded distinction if at least two out of three experts, i.e. preliminary examiners and opponent, so suggest. A separate form regarding the awarding of a distinction is sent to the opponent. Examiners may suggest the awarding of distinction on an appendix form to their examiner's statement. Faculty regulations on distinctions are sent to both examiners and the opponent.

3) A thesis awarded distinction must be of the highest scientific quality.

4) A prerequisite for the awarding of distinction is that the thesis is of international significance in the field of research in question, and that the findings and conclusions are either new or revise previous opinion or clinical practice.

5) The doctoral researcher's contribution to the original publications in the doctoral thesis is of particular importance.

6) The Faculty Council decides on the final grade of a thesis (approved/rejected) and on the merit 'accepted with distinction'.

7) The doctoral degree certificate given to the candidate will indicate that the thesis has been accepted with distinction.

#### ***4.11 Accepting a doctoral thesis, rectification process and doctoral degree certificate***

After the public defence of a doctoral thesis, the opponent delivers their statement, including appendices, to the Faculty. The Faculty Council accepts the doctoral thesis based on the opponent's statement. In a matter concerning the grading of a doctoral thesis, a doctoral researcher is given the opportunity to give a written response to the opponent's statement before the matter is solved (University Act 558/2009, 44§).

A doctoral researcher may demand rectification of the grading of a doctoral thesis in writing from the administrative body responsible for the grading of the thesis within fourteen (14) days of being informed about the decision (University Act 558/2009, 82§).



When the postgraduate studies required for a doctoral degree have been approved and when the Faculty Council has accepted the doctoral thesis based on an endorsing opponent's statement, a doctoral degree certificate is issued without a separate application. However, the degree cannot be issued until the required qualifying degree (master's degree or equivalent) has been completed. (See chapter 1. Requirements for a doctoral degree for more on qualifying education)

## 5 Funding

### 5.1 Research funding

For information on research funding, please see the Services Directory on the Research Funding Unit intranet site: <https://intranet.utu.fi/en/unit/research-funding>

For more information on research funding, please contact [researchservices@utu.fi](mailto:researchservices@utu.fi).

### 5.2 Travel allowance for doctoral training at the Faculty of Medicine and Turku University Foundation travel grants

Travel allowance for doctoral training at the Faculty:

- calls for applications organised by each doctoral programme at the Faculty
- information on calls for applications, application forms, and guidelines are available on the website of each doctoral programme:  
<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-programmes-in-the-faculty-of-medicine>

**NB!** Applicants must be registered as attending postgraduate students (doctoral degree) when applying for the travel allowance.

Turku University Foundation travel grants:

- Application forms and instructions are available on the Turku University Foundation website:  
<https://www.yliopistosaatio.fi/en/grants/>

### 5.3 Funding of costs caused by the doctoral thesis

#### 5.3.1 Printing- and proofreading costs

The printing grant for doctoral theses (financial support for printing and layout), which is not a grant by nature, is directed to all doctoral researchers at the University of Turku. The publishing support is paid on the basis of actual and verified costs, however, no more than 600 € (+ VAT 24%). In printing, the contract printing houses of the dissertations of the University of Turku must be used. If the doctoral candidate publishes their dissertation in electronic form only, the publishing support can be used for purchasing the layout service solely. The doctoral researcher does not have to apply for the printing grant. The disbursement is made based on an electronic invoice or online bill from the printer. For more instructions, please see the Guidelines for Dissertation Defence on the University website:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

Foundations and funds may award grants for costs arising from publishing a doctoral thesis. (see chapter 5.1 Research funding)

#### 5.3.2 Costs of preliminary examination and the opponent

The Faculty pays the preliminary examiners and the opponent a remuneration upon receiving the invoice form sent to the experts as an appendix to the appointment letter sent by the Faculty.

The doctoral researcher (or custos/supervisor/representative of doctoral subject) book the opponent's travel and accommodation with the help of the University's Travel Services (travelservices@utu.fi). The opponent's travel and accommodation expenses are reimbursed directly from the Faculty's cost centre by Travel Services, and additionally according to a possible travel invoice and receipts sent by the opponent. **NB!** The Faculty will reimburse a maximum of 2 nights of the opponent's accommodation. With foreign opponents (arriving from abroad), the Faculty will cover up to 500 euros worth of travel and accommodation expenses. The doctoral researcher should make sure that there is a cost centre available for further expenses.

## 6. General information

### 6.1 Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Education Unit (PGE)

In 1993, a postgraduate education unit called Turku Postgraduate School of Health Sciences was founded within the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Turku. Later, the unit was renamed Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Education Unit. This unit coordinates academic and professional postgraduate education, doctoral programmes and research tracks.

The PGE Board plans, coordinates, develops and evaluates postgraduate education and researcher training at the Faculty. For more information on the composition of the PGE Board in Finnish, please see here: <https://intranet.utu.fi/en/units/med/postgraduate-studies/doctoral/Pages/home.aspx>

**Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Education unite (PGE) courses:**

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/pge-courses>

### 6.2 Doctoral Committee

A Faculty appointed Doctoral Committee has operated at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Turku since 1988. The Doctoral Committee strives to have a balanced representation of all disciplines at the Faculty of Medicine.

Tasks and composition of the Doctoral Committee:

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/contact-information-of-the-doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-medicine/doctoral-committee>

**NB! When arranging practicalities related to the doctoral thesis, the meeting schedule of the Doctoral Committee and the Faculty Council must be taken into account.**

### 6.3 Meeting schedule

For technical reasons, the doctoral researcher must deliver their documents to the Faculty office on the dates mentioned in the meeting schedule, no later than:

- approximately 2 weeks before Faculty Council meetings
- approximately 1 week before Doctoral Committee meetings

The Doctoral Committee and Faculty Council meeting schedule is updated every semester. The meeting schedule and the deadlines for delivering documents are available on the Faculty website at

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/meeting-schedule>

### 6.4 Contact information

Faculty of Medicine

Medisiina Service Point, Medisiina C, 7th floor

Kiinamylynkatu 10, 20520 Turku

The Service Point is open Monday–Friday 12.00-14.00.

<https://www.utu.fi/en/university/faculty-of-medicine/doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-of-medicine/contact-information-of-the-doctoral-training-at-the-faculty-medicine>