

## Instructions for examiners

The purpose of the preliminary examination of the dissertation is to ensure that the dissertation meets the scientific and formal requirements before granting the permission to defend it. Additionally, the preliminary examination process generally improves the quality of the written work. For this reason, it is crucial that the preliminary examination is conducted carefully and that the faculty has the clearest possible statements when processing the permission to defend the doctoral thesis. According to a principle decision made by the faculty, the statement regarding the permission to defend the dissertation cannot be conditional; **it must either support or not support the granting of the permission**. However, the preliminary examiner may include comments and suggestions for improvement related to the work in their statement.

To grant the permission to defend the dissertation, the faculty requires two supporting preliminary examination statements, which is why preliminary examiners cannot write a joint statement.

The preliminary examiner is particularly expected to give a clear opinion on whether the research work underlying the dissertation is considered sufficient or if additional research is necessary. Similarly, the writing work should be evaluated, and the points that need to be redone or further refined should be defined in sufficient detail. The preliminary examiner's statement is free-form but should address the points listed below. Sections 1-5 relate to the quality of the research work, while sections 6-8 pertain to the quality of the writing.

### **1. General impression of the doctoral dissertation**

A brief description of the scientific content of the dissertation.

### **2. Topic and research question**

The originality and scientific significance of the topic. Is the topic central and relevant within the respective research sector and does it address essential problem areas? How much previous research exists on the same topic? Is the research question meaningful and scientifically relevant?

### **3. Data**

The quality, scope, and suitability of the data for addressing the research problem. Does the data provide the candidate with the opportunity to analyze and solve the research problem? Has the data collection been conducted in a scientifically valid manner? Has the candidate themselves carried out the data collection, processing, and analysis?

### **4. Methods and theoretical contribution**

A description of the methods and an assessment of their originality, reliability, difficulty, and suitability. Has the resolution of the posed problem required the development of new methods or the innovative and original application of known methods, or is the dissertation based on results collected from existing data or routinely gathered

outcomes? If the dissertation consists of multiple studies, an expert assessment of the candidate's personal contribution is requested. A statement detailing the candidate's independent work in any co-authored articles will be provided to the preliminary examiners along with the manuscript of the article-based dissertation.

What is the theoretical contribution of the dissertation to the candidate's field of study? Does the work provide a new theoretical perspective on the examination of the research problem, or does it utilize existing theoretical frameworks?

### **5. Results and conclusions**

An assessment of the reliability of the conclusions drawn and their scientific significance. Do the results primarily confirm previously obtained findings, or do they include new observations, and what is their scientific importance? Are the conclusions drawn from the results justified?

### **6. Structure and presentation of the writing**

A brief description of the manuscript's structure and the length of its various sections in terms of page numbers. Is the structuring successful, and are the different parts of the manuscript in appropriate proportion to one another? An opinion on the style of scientific presentation as well as language and formatting are also necessary.

### **7. Demonstrated knowledge of the research field**

The assessment is mainly based on the presentation of previous research related to the research problem addressed in the work. Are the literature references current and comprehensive? Is the presentation of previous research appropriate in terms of breadth and content? Does the candidate critically engage with previous research in the field and can they analyze the merits and weaknesses of earlier publications?

### **8. Demonstrated maturity in conclusions**

The appropriateness, criticality, and clarity of the conclusions chapter. Has the candidate succeeded in distinguishing the strengths and weaknesses of their own work and critically comparing their research findings with previous literature? Can the candidate identify the needs for further research? Are the conclusions drawn appropriately related to the research questions, the results of the dissertation work, and the existing knowledge in the field?

At the end of the preliminary examiner's statement, a separate summary may be presented, which includes, for example, 1) a brief description of the nature of the research, 2) the most significant results and the greatest merits of the research, 3) the quality of the manuscript, 4) identified shortcomings and opportunities for their correction, and 5) a statement regarding the suitability of the work for granting a permission for defence; the statement cannot be conditional.

The preliminary examiner should not give a conditional supportive statement; instead, **the preliminary examination statement must clearly indicate whether the permission to defend the dissertation is supported or not.**