

## COMPLETING A DOCTORAL THESIS AT TSE

- The doctoral thesis shall demonstrate the candidate's deep understanding of the research topic and their ability to produce new scientific knowledge independently.
- It is completed under the guidance of one or more supervisors, possibly representing different disciplines. One supervisor is normally a professor in the candidate's major discipline.
- A doctoral thesis may be a monograph or a compilation thesis.

### ***A compilation thesis***

- A compilation thesis comprises a set of interrelated *studies* preceded by a *synthesis*. It must deal with one coherent scientific problem or a set of interrelated problems.
- The *synthesis*, written by the doctoral candidate, motivates the thesis and positions it in a particular research area, formulates the research problem and objectives both of the thesis as a whole and of the interrelated studies, specifies the role of the individual studies in the thesis, justifies the data and methods employed, and outlines the results and contribution of the studies and the thesis as a whole.
- A *study* may be a published scientific article, an article manuscript approved for publication, a chapter in a book or conference volume, a publication in, for example, a series of a university or research institute, or an unpublished article manuscript intended for publication. Parts of a previously published doctoral thesis cannot be included in another thesis by the same author. Three to five studies are typical in a compilation thesis, the number being less significant than the scientific contribution made by the thesis as a whole.
- Joint research results can be included in a compilation thesis if the candidate has contributed independently to their production. The candidate's role in the research must be demonstrated in a written statement signed by the co-author(s). The statement shall be addressed to the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies on requesting the assignment of preliminary examiners, to whom it will then be forwarded. A doctoral thesis is evaluated as the candidate's individual accomplishment and, hence, the candidate's own overall accomplishment must meet the requirements set for a doctoral thesis.
- The candidate must obtain written permission from the respective publishers in order to print published articles in a doctoral thesis.

## PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

- After a hearing of the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics, the Director of the Doctoral Programme appoints one or two opponents to the public examination, based on the proposal of either the supervising professor or a professor in the candidate's major subject. The Director of the Doctoral Programme also confirms the date for the public examination and appoints a Grading Committee for the grading of the thesis.
- The supervisor(s) or an Education and Research Secretary from the University Support Services handles the practical arrangements relating to an opponent's visit to Turku School of Economics.
- The dress code for the doctoral candidate, the opponent(s) and the Custos (the Chair of the examination) is a long sleeved black dress for women, and evening dress for men. The convention may be dark suit if the candidate, Custos and opponent(s) so agree.

### ***Official procedure at the public examination of a doctoral thesis***

1. In processional order, the doctoral candidate enters the room first, followed by the Custos and then the opponent(s). The audience shall stand.
2. The Custos and opponent(s) shall hold their doctoral hat (if awarded) in the left hand on entering and leaving the room. During the public examination, hats are placed on the table with the lyre toward the audience.
3. Once all including the audience are seated, the Custos, standing, opens the proceedings with the following words: "As Custos appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics, I declare that this public examination has begun."
4. The candidate, standing, then delivers their *lectio praecursoria* (introductory lecture), which shall not exceed 20 minutes. The lecture begins with the salutation: "Learned Custos, my esteemed opponent(s), ladies and gentlemen."
5. The candidate concludes the *lectio praecursoria* with the following words: "Professor N.N., I respectfully ask you, as the opponent duly appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Programme, to present your comments on my doctoral thesis."
6. The opponent(s), standing, will then deliver a short statement concerning the scientific status and significance of the topic of the thesis, together with any other comments of a more general nature. Following this statement, both the opponent(s) and candidate resume their seats.
7. In the examination of the thesis, the opponent(s) shall begin by addressing general questions and then proceed to a detailed scrutiny of the text. The examination will cover the research problem, its motivation and scientific positioning, research objectives, theories, methods and data employed, results, conclusions, and scientific contribution. The correction of misprints is not addressed in the proceedings. The candidate may give the opponent(s) a written list of identified misprints; this may be appended to the opponent(s)' final statement submitted to the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics.
8. The opponent(s) shall spend no longer than four hours on the examination, leaving sufficient time for other speakers to present questions or comments. If the

examination is lengthy, the Custos might announce an interval. The examination shall not exceed six hours in total; typically, its duration is 2–3 hours.

9. The opponent(s) will conclude the examination with closing remarks (e.g. how well the candidate has succeeded in defending the thesis) and a final statement on the thesis, including general comments on its strengths, weaknesses and contribution to its field, and finally whether (s)he will recommend its acceptance. The opponent(s) and the candidate stand during the closing remarks. Following the final statement, the opponent(s) resumes their seat.
10. The candidate, standing, then thanks the opponent(s) for the discussion.
11. The candidate next turns to the audience and says: “I now respectfully invite any members of the audience who wish to offer comments on my thesis to ask the Custos for permission to speak.” The candidate then sits.
12. The Custos then leads the discussion, and is responsible for ensuring that the candidate is able to reply to each question or comment, and that the discussion is relevant to the topic.
13. Finally, standing, the Custos concludes proceedings with the following words: “The public examination of the doctoral thesis is now concluded.” The opponent(s), candidate and audience shall be seated.

After the public examination, with the audience standing, the opponent(s), Custos and candidate leave the room in that order, followed by the audience.

## **GRADING OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

- After a hearing of the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme, the Director of the Doctoral Programme appoints a Grading Committee for the grading of the thesis. Members of the Committee are the opponent(s), the preliminary examiner(s) and the supervisor(s) of the doctoral thesis.
- Before the public examination the Doctoral Candidate shall submit a written response on the significant changes made to the thesis based on the preliminary examination. Also the final thesis and the preliminary examiner’s statements are delivered to the members of the Grading Committee by the secretary of the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme.

### ***Discussion of the Grading Committee***

- The Grading Committee will discuss the grading of the thesis. Arrangements for the discussion are handled by the custos. The discussion should be organised as a face to face meeting or online video call/meeting. Discussion by email is possible yet not encouraged as it makes the dialogue between the members more challenging. After the discussion the opponent(s) appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Programme shall write a final statement on the thesis. Although the supervisor(s) take part in the Grading Committee discussion and provide potentially necessary background information for the Committee, the opponent(s) propose a grade for the thesis independently

### ***The opponent’s final statement***

- Following the public examination and after a hearing of the Grading Committee, the opponent(s) appointed by the Director of the Doctoral Programme shall have two weeks from the date of the public examination to deliver a written statement (approximately 1200–1600 words) including a substantiated evaluation of the scientific value of the final doctoral thesis. Also, the statement shall include an evaluation of how the candidate succeeded in defending the thesis. Based on these arguments, the opponent(s) shall propose a grade for the doctoral thesis. The statement shall include information on



hearing the Grading Committee. If more than one opponent was invited, they can deliver individual statements or a joint statement.

- The opponent's final statement shall be delivered to the Council of Turku School of Economics to the following email address: [tse-asiakirjat@utu.fi](mailto:tse-asiakirjat@utu.fi) (TSE Registry).

***Notification of the suggested grade***

- The Grading Committee shall be notified of the grade suggested in the opponent's final statement by the secretary of the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme. As a member of the Grading Committee the preliminary examiner must as soon as possible respond to the notification and inform whether he/she agrees or disagrees with *the grade* (not the content of the statement per se). In the case the preliminary examiner(s) disagrees he/she shall have 14 days from the date of being notified to deliver a written statement on his/her opinion to the Council of Turku School of Economics.
- After hearing the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme of TSE, the Director of the Doctoral Programme of TSE shall grade the doctoral thesis on the basis of the opponent's final statement and possible statement(s) from the member(s) of the Grading Committee.

## THE GRADE

Grading reflects the scientific contribution of the doctoral thesis, which usually corresponds to its potential to result in journal publications and consequent citations. The grade relates to the thesis as a whole, not some of its parts (e.g. published articles). If parts of a compilation thesis are co-authored, grading shall relate to the candidate's individual contribution. The contents of the statement must reflect the grade suggested. The grade for the thesis will be proposed employing the scale described below:

### **Laudatur, "Outstanding"**

The thesis makes an *exceptional contribution* to the knowledge in its field. It will most likely result or has already resulted in articles being published in major refereed scientific journals. Major denotes a highly respected journal that is not, however, necessarily among the top 10 or so, due to variations in ranking procedures between different fields. The results of the thesis will likely be widely cited in the scientific literature.

As such, outstanding grades are rare and detailed justifications are required in the statement.

### **Eximia cum laude approbatur, "Excellent"**

The thesis makes a *very significant contribution* to the knowledge in its field. It contains innovative and creative ideas, and has great potential to result or has already resulted in one or more articles being published in major refereed scientific journals. The thesis is expected to be cited, possibly widely so, in the scientific literature.

### **Magna cum laude approbatur, "Very Good"**

The thesis makes a *significant contribution* to the knowledge in its field. It might result or has already resulted in one or more articles being published in refereed scientific journals, possibly in those that are major. The thesis is expected to be cited in the scientific literature.

### **Cum laude approbatur, "Good"**

The thesis makes a *rather significant contribution* to the knowledge in its field. The research results might be publishable or already published in refereed scientific journals. The thesis has some potential to be cited in the scientific literature.

### **Non sine laude approbatur, "Fair"**

The scientific contribution of the thesis to the knowledge in its field bears *some significance*. The thesis demonstrates the author's ability to produce new scientific results. However, the ideas might not have fully matured. Further work may result in articles published in refereed scientific journals.

### **Lubenter approbatur, "Poor"**

The thesis fulfils the scientific criteria set for a doctoral thesis; however, its *scientific contribution in its field is very limited*. Publishing the research results in a refereed scientific journal will require a substantial amount of work.

### **Approbatur, "Pass"**

The thesis fulfils the minimum standards of acceptance and is highly unlikely to result in articles being published in refereed scientific journals.

### **Improbatur, "Fail"**