

Practical information for PhD evaluation committees at Faculty of Science and Technology (REALTEK), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) (February 2025)

The first part gives an extract of the NMBU PhD regulation, presenting elements of particular relevance for the evaluation committee. The second part provides timetables, for helping the committee to prepare in a timely manner.

Please note that all communication between evaluation committee and PhD candidate or supervisors, is to go through the Committee coordinator.

Part 1: NMBU PhD regulation: Elements of particular relevance for the evaluation committee

NMBU Regulations concerning the PhD Thesis and the work of the evaluation committee is given in the NMBU PhD regulation, Norwegian version: <https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2024-11-13-3024> (In force from 1 January 2025, no English translation available yet.)

- §10 The thesis, General requirements for the PhD thesis,
- §14 The work of the evaluation committee, and
- §17 The doctoral exam – trial lecture and public defence.

NMBU Regulations concerning the PhD Thesis and the work of the evaluation committee is given in Additional to NMBU regulations, REALTEK has the following recommendations:

REALTEK recommends minimum 3 publications, with minimum one of them published/accepted for publication. The evaluation committee is to decide if the work is sufficient for a PhD degree within the given research field (also paying attention to the co-authorship declarations, following the PhD thesis). REALTEK recommends the following components to be included in the “Introductory chapter”/“kappe” summarizing the contribution in several articles:

- Abstract in English and Norwegian
- Introduction, background and state of knowledge providing the scientific context
- Theoretical framework
- Methodology
- Coherence/integration of shorter papers, discussing their objectives/results in relation to each other, and if relevant, how conclusions merge into an overall conclusion
- Overall results and discussion of the contributions to the research area
- Conclusions – with recommendations for future work and/or practical implications

Note that these are recommendations. Research areas may have deviating traditions.

Part 2: Timetables for Evaluation committee

Timetable for Scientific work of the evaluation committee

When	What
6 weeks prior to the planned date of defence (providing time for the coordinator to merge comments, clarify any	The committee is expected to provide comments, and to conclude if the thesis is approved for public defence or not. We ask that external opponents provide individual assessments and fill in table in NMBU 4.4

divergences and prepare the joint report)	Assessment of the thesis . The committee coordinator will compile the joint report, Form 4.4.
At the latest 25 working days before the defence	Committee coordinator sends the committee's assessment (form 4.4) including any individual assessments by external opponents, to the PhD candidate/faculty administration
3 weeks prior to the defence	Committee agrees on the Topic of trial lecture. Coordinator forwards the title to PhD administration, who will announce it to the PhD candidate 10 working days before the defence
On the day of the defence (See schedule for the defence, below)	The evaluation committee is expected to evaluate the trial lecture and the defence on NMBU 4.5c Evaluation of the trial lecture and public defence

Timetable for practical issues, flight and hotel bookings, reimbursements, etc.

When	What
When the thesis is approved for public defence	Opponents are requested to book hotel and train/flight tickets (Oslo Airport Gardermoen) themselves: Please plan for arriving in the afternoon/evening the day before the defence, and to stay for two nights. If you leave on the day of the defence, please book a flight from OSL at 20:00 or later
Ahead of the defence (in the morning on the day of defence or the evening before)	The committee will prepare and discuss the share of work at the defence. Depending on arrivals, the committee will sometimes meet for dinner the evening before the defence
At the day of the defence	There is no strict dress code, but public defences in Norway are quite formal (jeans not recommended)
When/if defence is approved	If successful, a small celebration on spot. And, if the candidate so wishes, an evening party
After the defence	Please fill in Fee form - PhD Evaluation Committee - Nettskjema : Remember to upload travel expense claim form (attached), travel receipts and (for non-Norwegians) copy of passport.

Schedule for the defence (the regular way, variations/divergences may be agreed)

10:15 – 11:00	Trial lecture (45 minutes) on given topic
11:00 – 11:15	Committee evaluates the trial lecture. As described in NMBU PhD regulation, §17 (see below), the trial lecture must be approved before the public defence
11:15 – 12:15	Lunch for committee, supervisors and chair of defence
12:15 – ~15:00	Public defence: The candidate gives a +/- 30 minutes presentation of the thesis. First opponent discusses the thesis with the PhD candidate for approximately one hour. Next, second opponent confronts the PhD candidate
~15:00 –	Committee convenes to evaluate the public defence, and to finish Statement from evaluation committee for the trial lecture and the public defence, Form 4.5c . Committee coordinator sends Form 4.5c to phd-realtek@nmbu.no . Committee presents conclusions to the candidate and audience, congratulations, etc.