

Guidelines for third semester evaluation of PhD candidates at the Department of Technology Systems (ITS)

According to the Supplementary Regulations at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences to the Regulations for the Degree of Ph.D. at the University of Oslo, all Ph.D.-candidates must complete a third semester evaluation. A third semester evaluation must take place no sooner than twelve months and no later than fifteen months after admission to the PhD programme¹. Results achieved in this period must be presented to an evaluation committee, and the PhD candidate must clarify deviations, if any, from the progress plan.

The purpose of the evaluation is first and foremost to give the candidates the opportunity to present their work, to get external input and new ideas for further research, rethink their project, and ultimately increase their confidence in their own work and their job satisfaction. It also provides an opportunity for the candidates, their supervisors, and the ITS PhD committee, to identify challenges with the project and take appropriate actions. The expectation for the evaluation is not for the candidate to show a significant academic production, but rather to ensure that the project is developing as planned.

1. Coordination

The PhD coordinator will inform the supervisor when there is a PhD candidate who needs to complete an evaluation. The main/principal supervisor is responsible for appointing the evaluation committee and to coordinate the evaluation meeting.

Prior to the meeting, the PhD candidate should pre-fill some parts of the evaluation form with the PhD candidates facts; Name, Compulsory duties, Courses taken and Publications, and sent the form to the evaluation committee members to fill out the rest during the evaluation meeting.

2. Composition of the evaluation committee

The composition of the committee should promote an independent and relevant evaluation. The committee shall be composed of two external members (i.e. not part of the supervisor team), and at least one of them must be external to the research group of the PhD candidate. The PhD coordinator and/or a representative of the PhD committee at ITS can also be present at the third semester evaluation meeting if they desire.

¹ <http://www.mn.uio.no/english/research/phd/regulations/regulations.html>



3. Preparations: PhD candidate's presentation

The PhD candidate should prepare a 20-30 minutes presentation for the evaluation meeting. The presentation should cover the following points:

- A general description of the status of the projects so far, including a description of and comments on eventual deviations/changes regarding:
 - The research projects
 - The educational component
 - Teaching duties
- A description of what has been achieved so far in the project, including how latest research in the field has influenced the direction of the project.
- An overview of publications that are accepted, submitted, or in progress.
- An updated time schedule for the research project/thesis writing with timed sub-goals, and an assessment of which points in the plan may be the most time-critical.
- A discussion of the probability of the project being completed on time according to the (revised) plan.
- Desired changes of terms to ensure the success of the project, enhance the quality of its outcome, and increase the job satisfaction etc.

Some PhD candidates optionally send a draft presentation to the evaluation committee prior to the meeting, together with the pre-filled evaluation form that the PhD candidate is obliged to send (see Section 1 above).

4. The third semester evaluation meeting

1. The PhD candidate first gives a presentation.
2. Then, there is an open discussion between the evaluation committee, the the PhD candidate and supervisors about the research, progress and timeline.
3. The supervisors then leave the room and questions related to supervision, relationship with supervisors and progress are then discussed privately without supervisors in a separate meeting. The aim of this meeting is to reveal any challenges affecting working relations, like issues related to teamwork and colleagues; issues related to supervision and co-authorship and/or improper attention or behavior by supervisors or colleagues.
4. Finally, the PhD candidate leaves the room, and the supervisors are also allowed to speak to the committee in private.
5. All meeting participants gathers again, and the committe concludes the meeting

5. Reporting and follow-up

On the basis of the presentation, discussions and the separate meetings, the committee writes a report according to the evaluation form template. The committee submits the evaluation form to the Ph.D.-coordinator at ITS, who follows up if necessary.

This version of the guidelines was adopted by the PhD committee at ITS on 2024-03-07

Paal Engelstad, Head of PhD committee