



PHD HANDBOOK

for candidates

This handbook has the PhD candidate in focus and aims to achieve the best possible completion of the doctoral program.

School of Doctoral Studies
Kristiania University of Applied Sciences
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Introduction

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences (hereafter Kristiania) offers study programmes all the way from vocational school to doctorate.

The educational programme leading to the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD) is the highest level of formal education in Norway.

It involves active research work under supervision, and results in qualification for research activity and other work requiring a high degree of scientific insight and analytical thinking.

The aim of the PhD education at Kristiania, is to educate independent researchers with high qualifications at an international level. This is to be done in collaboration with national and international research environments and in accordance with recognised scientific and ethical principles.

At Kristiania, we aim to support our PhD candidates in creating new research-based knowledge in the forefront of their respective field of research and to succeed after graduation. Candidates are expected to continue either as professional academic researchers or in a professional career outside of academia, whether in private companies or public institutions, where their sophisticated research skills are in high demand.

The School of Doctoral Studies (SDS) is responsible for all doctoral education at Kristiania and is linked with all active academic research environments at the institution. To achieve this objective, the SDS places large emphasis on:

- ensuring relevant state-of-the-art PhD courses.

- ensuring a high academic level of the PhD programmes through continuous quality assurance, development of existing PhD courses and supporting the development of new courses.
- developing and ensuring the quality of PhD supervision.
- supporting the PhD candidates in presenting their projects at international conferences, in publishing their research and in their studies abroad.
- attracting leading international researchers to the activities of the PhD school, as lecturers in PhD courses, as discussants in work-in-progress seminars, as supervisors and as members in PhD thesis assessment committees.
- establishing institutionalised cooperative agreements with international researchers and research environments.
- maintaining a forum for PhD candidates with seminars on professional, practical, and psychosocial matters that aims to support them through a holistic approach.
- establishing and maintaining a forum for the development of ideas and best practices, in support of PhD activities in the different departments of Kristiania.

The focus of the handbook for PhD education is on the PhD candidate. The aim is to complete the PhD process in the best way possible. The handbook follows the stages of the pathway to a PhD from admission to completion and the public defence.

The handbook complies with legislation and regulations at national and local level, including regulations for the degree of PhD and agreement concerning admission to organized PhD education at Kristiania. Therefore, it should be read alongside Kristiania's PhD regulations and agreements. Candidates employed as PhD fellows must also adhere to the university's personnel handbook and employment terms.

The School of Doctoral Studies is the academic and administrative unit responsible for all doctoral education at Kristiania. In this handbook, however, the term School of Doctoral Studies is used as a simplified collective reference to the different committees and roles involved in governing and administering the PhD programmes. Formal decisions are made by the appropriate committees and role holders, such as the Doctoral Degree Committee, the Programme Committees, the Heads of Programme, and the Dean of School of Doctoral Studies, supported in their work by the PhD Coordinators. For clarity and readability, these committees and roles are referred to collectively as the School of Doctoral Studies throughout this document. Readers who require a detailed overview of the formal governance structure and distribution of responsibilities should consult the full **PhD Governance Handbook**.



Guide to PhD process

This part of the handbook serves as a guide that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of PhD candidates, supervisors, and schools. It describes the whole PhD path forward to the end and indicates which level of the organization is responsible for initiating action.

The School of Doctoral Studies is responsible for the development, governance, and administration of the PhD programs and their quality assurance, while the host Schools are responsible for the academic environment.

Admission and Funding

PhD candidates at Kristiania will be assured a good start-up phase that will lay the premises for successful completion of the PhD programme.

Admission requirements are described in the PhD regulations and in any supplementary provisions that may be included in the curricula for the doctoral programmes. To be admitted to a PhD programme, funding and a successfully completed master's degree in accordance with the PhD regulations are required.

A PhD education requires high proficiency in English. The candidate is expected to be able to communicate research results both orally and in writing in English, and to attend seminars conducted in English, etc.

To start a PhD education, funding is essential. PhD candidates do not have student status in Norway and therefore cannot apply for support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund.

Most successful applicants admitted to doctoral programmes at Kristiania will be employed as research fellows. Research fellowship vacancies at Kristiania can be found on the institution's website. Candidates can also enter into a funding agreement with an employer other than Kristiania.

Among other types of support, the Research Council of Norway provides financial support to public enterprises (public-sector PhD) or to the private sector (industrial PhD) for employees wanting to complete a doctoral degree. Through this scheme, companies can apply to receive financial support for an employee who wants to complete a PhD in an amount up to 50% of the current PhD fellowship rate. Potential candidates and their employer interested in entering collaboration on an Industrial- or a public-sector PhD are welcome to contact the PhD coordinator for the relevant PhD programme.

PhD candidate:

- is responsible for applying for admission to the PhD programme by the stated deadline, normally within three months from starting the research project leading to the PhD degree, in consultation with the supervisor.
- shall prepare a complete project description in collaboration with the supervisor.
- shall prepare a plan for the required coursework or other academic training in consultation with the supervisor.
- shall familiarise themselves with the regulations and guidelines pertaining to the use and storage of research data and apply for necessary permissions.
- shall familiarize themselves with ethical research guidelines and plan for compliance.
- shall familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions of the final PhD agreement.

Supervisor(s):

- shall assist the PhD candidate in formulating the research questions in connection with the application process as well as drafting the project description and progress plan.
- shall have a start-up conversation about supervision with the candidate initiated by the main supervisor.

- shall ensure that the ethical research guidelines and relevant privacy and data protection regulations and guidelines are considered in the application where relevant, and that the candidate obtains any necessary permits for the use of research data.
- shall introduce the candidate to relevant academic environments: internal, national, and international.

School of Doctoral Studies:

- ensures quality assurance for the admission process to admit highly qualified candidates to the PhD programmes.
- processes the application for admission and makes the final decision on admission.
- is responsible for appointing supervisors and ensures that supervisors fulfil the requirements in the regulations.
- is responsible for the onboarding, follow-up, and integration of the PhD candidates into the academic community.
- ensures that the candidate applies for admission to the PhD programme in cooperation with the supervisor, normally within three months after start-up, and supports the candidates in the application procedure.
- shall hold an introductory seminar for all new candidates.
- shall ensure the doctoral agreement is signed by all parties.

Host School:

- shall provide the candidate with essential information, provide guidance, and ensure the necessary infrastructure and resources are in place.
- shall ensure that candidates are integrated into the relevant research and work environment as early as possible.
- in cooperation with the candidate, shall draw up a plan for the implementation of any compulsory duties in accordance with the regulations.
- shall ensure compliance with research data obligations by requiring the PhD candidate, supervisor, and external parties to submit necessary authorizations.

The doctoral degree agreement:

Work on the PhD thesis shall be performed under individual supervision. The School of Doctoral Studies appoints supervisors for the candidates in collaboration with the host Schools. In some cases, a PhD grant will be associated with a particular supervisor already at the time the grant is advertised.

Admission is concluded contractually between Kristiania and the candidate. The agreement upon admission to organised doctoral education (PhD), is the agreement governing candidates' rights and obligations during the PhD studies within the framework of applicable laws and regulations.

The PhD candidate is to have at least two supervisors, one of whom is appointed as the main supervisor. The PhD agreement, Part B, Agreement on professional supervision during the PhD programme, shall be filled out by all candidates admitted. Contracting parties in Part B are candidates, supervisors and Kristiania. If a candidate has several formal supervisors, Part B of the agreement shall include all supervisors.

Procedures concerning the appointment of a supervisor are discussed in the PhD regulations. Main- and co-supervisors must have a PhD. The main supervisor has the overall responsibility for the candidate. If an external is appointed as the main supervisor, a co-supervisor employed at Kristiania must also be appointed. One or more co-supervisors who do not fulfil the formal qualification requirements, but who have specific competence that is vital to the completion of the PhD project, could be appointed. Competence and relevance must be specified in the appointment application.

All supervisors have joint responsibility for academic follow-up and shall make provisions to enable the candidate to participate in an active research environment with senior researchers and other PhD candidates regularly. Good dialogue, mutual trust and respect between the PhD candidate and the supervisor are essential for productive cooperation and good results.

During the PhD

PhD candidates at Kristiania shall be ensured high quality education and support in all parts of the doctoral programme so that they can confidently complete the PhD within the prescribed timeframe and achieve the learning outcomes described for the programme.

Once PhD candidates have started their doctoral projects, maintaining motivation is crucial. They should be part of engaging academic and social environments that support their progress. To prevent delays and reduce dropout rates, effective follow-up must be ensured throughout the PhD journey.

PhD candidate:

- shall actively work on their research questions and become familiar with the latest developments in the field relevant to their PhD work.

- is responsible for conducting research compliant with applicable legislation and ethical research guidelines.
- shall participate actively in supervisor meetings and follow up on arrangements made with the supervisor(s).
- shall enrol in and complete the courses constituting the coursework or other academic training component.
- shall apply for any changes to be made in the coursework or other academic training component.
- shall keep supervisors continuously informed about issues important for progress, including results of the required coursework or other academic training.
- shall publish in accordance with the traditions of the research field, preferably in recognized international channels, when the thesis is based on published work.
- shall participate actively in the academic community and is expected to present their project in internal and external professional forums during the study programme.
- shall adhere to the agreed progress plan, submit annual progress reports, and complete an annual evaluation of the PhD programme.
- shall complete work-in-progress seminar and mid-term evaluation.
- has a duty to report work outcomes having a commercial potential.
- shall keep the host school and the School of Doctoral Studies informed of major changes in the project and about circumstances that may lead to delays.
- must take the initiative to discuss with supervisors any challenges or problems that may arise in connection with research work or supervision, and if it is not possible to discuss the issue with the supervisor(s), discuss with the head of the programme or PhD coordinator.

Supervisor(s):

- shall ensure and follow up progress and conduct regular supervisory dialogues, with the main supervisor holding academic responsibility and coordinating with co-supervisors.
- shall help to ensure that the candidate is integrated in the academic environment and is kept informed about the latest development within the field.
- shall help the candidate to establish contacts with relevant academic environments and encourage internationalization.
- shall help the candidate publish in high-quality scholarly channels and ensure that ethical research guidelines are followed.

- is responsible for evaluating the candidate's progress, conducting work-in-progress seminar and mid-term evaluation, and submit annual progress reports.
- is responsible for making the candidate aware of the rules and regulations regarding the use and storage of research data and good research ethics, when applicable.
- shall report non-conformances and concerns to the host school and the School of Doctoral Studies, with the main supervisor holding primary academic responsibility.
- has a duty to report work outcomes having a commercial potential.
- shall evaluate the composition of the supervision resources and initiate changes, if necessary, with the main supervisor holding primary responsibility.
- is responsible for further developing their own competence as a supervisor through participation in external academic environments and courses and other learning arenas for PhD supervisors.

School of Doctoral Studies:

- shall follow-up and ensure that candidates receive regular and predictable high-quality guidance in line with Kristiania's PhD regulations.
- shall ensure that the candidate's progress is on schedule in accordance with the funding and admission agreements, and that the PhD work complies with good research practice and follows the academic standards.
- shall ensure that work-in-progress and mid-term evaluations are done.
- shall ensure annual reporting and follow up progress reports from candidates and supervisors.
- shall create arenas for discussions with the scientific community, PhD-candidates, and labour market actors, to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation and interaction, related to programme development and relevance.
- shall facilitate internationalization in the designated PhD programme by ensuring that exchange agreements are up to date and relevant, and that Kristiania's PhD candidates are supported in visits to international partner institutions.
- shall ensure that the academic community responsible for the programme has the appropriate competence in research and education, including scientific supervision.
- shall provide administrative guidance to PhD candidates and supervisors.
- shall have procedures for receiving and recording non-conformances and concerns in connection with academic progress in the PhD and deal with these quickly to initiate necessary measures in cooperation with the supervisor(s) and the host School.

- shall identify reasons for dropout by conducting interviews with candidates who voluntarily interrupt their education.
- shall provide measures for further development of supervisory skills.

Host School:

- shall keep informed of the PhD candidate's progress and ensure that it is according to plan.
- shall offer PhD candidates good working conditions in an attractive and inclusive environment, both academically and socially.
- shall offer all PhD fellows an annual employee interview.
- shall ensure that any required duties comply with the regulations in force and that they are organized in such a way that they do not impede completion within the prescribed period of study.
- must facilitate internationalization of doctoral education.

Work-in-progress seminar and mid-term evaluation

After one year, the candidate presents their work at a work-in-progress seminar and receives feedback from an internally appointed opponent. After two years, a mid-term evaluation is conducted, where a group of at least two individuals, including at least one external member, assesses the academic status and progress of the work.

Challenges in the supervisor–PhD candidate relationship

Challenges sometimes arise in the relationship between the supervisor and PhD candidate. The most important thing candidates can do if problems arise is to bring them up as soon as possible and preferably with the supervisor in question. If, for any reason, it is difficult to bring the matter up with the supervisor or if it does not lead to improvement in the situation, the School of Doctoral Studies in collaboration with the host School must provide the necessary assistance. Who to contact will depend on what the problem is and with who the candidate feels comfortable discussing these issues with. It could be the head of the programme, the PhD coordinator, or the immediate superior (i.e., line manager). The most important thing is that the candidate contacts someone and they together agree on the way forward. Depending on the nature of the issue, various measures can be implemented. However, it is the candidate's responsibility to report the matter to the appropriate person. Addressing the problem early in the process increases the likelihood of making the necessary adjustments, ensuring progress

and a positive outcome for all parties involved. The head of the program should eventually be informed before the situation escalates further.

If the candidate, or the supervisor, experience that the other party does not meet its obligations in relation to the PhD agreement and regulations, the candidate must discuss the matter and try to reach a solution. If this does not lead to improvement, the candidate and the supervisor have a right to request that the supervisor relationship is ended. This request must be sent to the School of Doctoral Studies, in accordance with the PhD agreement, which makes the final decision in such cases and the supervisor is not permitted to step down until a new supervisor has been appointed. Any disputes about the supervisor and candidate's rights and obligations can be brought forward by the parties to be considered and decided by the School of Doctoral Studies.

Termination before the agreed time

The candidate and the institution may mutually agree to terminate the PhD education early. In such cases of voluntary termination, the SDS must identify the reasons for the candidate's decision and conduct an interview to explore possible alternatives to prevent termination.

The institution may enforce termination of PhD education before the agreement period ends, in accordance with the regulations. After the agreement period expires, the candidate's rights and obligations under the PhD agreement cease, including supervision, course participation, and access to institutional resources. The maximum study period is six years from the start date to dissertation submission, excluding duty work and statutory interruptions. Exceeding this limit results in the loss of the right to defend the dissertation. The candidate may apply to have the dissertation assessed and to defend, and the institution may allow defence of the dissertation even if the candidate has exceeded the six-year limit.

Period of study at a host institution and residency requirement

Research stays at other international institutions during study are encouraged. Such stays should, as far as possible, be included in the project description, and can be spent taking various courses or doing parts of the research work. Any stay at an external institution, that was not included in the original plan, must be approved in writing by the supervisor and the immediate superior at Kristiania. Information and approval of stay at another institution must be sent to the PhD coordinator as soon as possible after approval.

PhD candidates with external funding or a workplace outside Kristiania are generally expected to spend at least one year of their PhD education in a strong and relevant academic

environment at the institution. This residency requirement may be reduced, but the proposed arrangement must ensure adequate supervision and maintain high academic quality.

Absence

It is important to inform Kristiania about short- and long-term absences. If candidates need to extend their study period, a separate application form must be filled out for changes in the contractual period including an account of why the agreement needs to be extended and how the extension will be financed. Extended funding from Kristiania due to low progress cannot be expected. In the event of an extension due to leave, sickness absence, work on other projects or similar circumstances, documentation or confirmation from the employer must be available. Kristiania makes decisions in applications for leave of absence other than absences regulated by law.

Completion of the PhD

Research work and publications by PhD candidates at Kristiania must meet high international standards. The process for finalizing and submitting the thesis is outlined in the regulations and described in detail in Kristiania's quality procedures and work descriptions. This includes step-by-step guidance, as well as relevant forms and templates for submission and assessment of the thesis.

To qualify for a PhD degree, candidates must complete the required coursework or academic training and submit their doctoral work for assessment. Kristiania is responsible for ensuring the submitted work meets high academic standards. The assessment must confirm that the research is independent, meets international standards, and is suitable for publication within the discipline.

Once the assessment committee deems the doctoral work worthy of public defence, the disputation must be planned and conducted. During the disputation, the candidate publicly defends their work, demonstrating its contribution to new scientific knowledge.

PhD candidate:

- is responsible for completing the thesis work and the coursework or other academic training within the prescribed period.
- is responsible for the content of the thesis and for ensuring that it meets high international standards.
- shall account for their contribution to joint work in articles and obtain declarations/statements from all the co-authors.

- shall inform the supervisor before submitting the thesis for assessment.
- shall have had the thesis proofread before submitting it for assessment.
- is responsible for ensuring that the PhD thesis meets high ethical and research standards in accordance with applicable regulations and the guidelines in the programme description before submission.
- shall submit a succinct summary of the PhD thesis in Norwegian and in English to the PhD coordinator.
- shall ensure that the manuscript is delivered to the library for publication in accordance with the Kristiania PhD template.
- is responsible for familiarizing him or herself with the faculty's requirements and procedures for completion, submission, and public defence.

Supervisor(s):

- shall ensure that the doctoral work meets the quality requirements before it is submitted.
- must contribute to making it possible for the doctoral work to be completed within the prescribed period.
- shall propose an assessment committee for the thesis.

School of Doctoral Studies:

- shall ensure that the candidate's thesis meets the minimum requirements for research competence and that the expected learning outcomes are achieved.
- shall ensure that the assessment and public defence can take place within the applicable time limits.
- is responsible for approving the application for assessment and appointing the assessment committee.
- is responsible for submitting the thesis and other required documentation to the assessment committee.
- shall decide on whether the thesis is worthy to be defended after receiving the statement from the assessment committee and response from the candidate.
- is responsible for facilitating and following up the trial lecture and public defence.

Trial lecture and public defence

The topic of a trial lecture shall be made known to the candidate and publicly announced ten working days before the lecture. The assessment committee provides the topic for the trial lecture, and the topic shall not be directly related to the topic of the thesis.

The public defence is the candidate's defence of the thesis itself. The SDS organises the public defence. The time and place of the public defence are publicly announced no later than ten working days before it is held. As a rule, the trial lecture and public defence are held on the same day.

Quality in PhD education



The Quality Assurance System at Kristiania is approved by NOKUT. In addition, the PhD programmes may have their own supplementary provisions. The processes and routines for the quality assurance system for the third cycle is available at specific webpages at the website of Kristiania. These are an addition to the webpages that describe other important aspects of research support, such as research ethics, library services and others.

Progress report

During the agreement period, the PhD candidate must submit an annual report to the university about the progress in the PhD education.

The supervisors also submit an annual report on the candidate's progress.

The reports are submitted in a designated online form and should be treated confidentially when the information indicates so.

The candidate and the supervisor have equal responsibility for reporting. Lack of or inadequate progress reporting from the candidate may result in the forced termination of the research education before the end of the agreement period.

Supervisors who fail to fulfil their reporting duty may be relieved of their supervisory responsibility.

Annual programme report

The PhD programmes are evaluated yearly. The evaluation is based on data from the different sources such as the PhD candidates, the supervisors, and the programme committee. The evaluation report of the programmes will be used as the basis for a report at the institutional level that covers all the PhD programs at the SDS. This report will be presented as a separate chapter in the Quality Assurance Report written at the institutional level.



School of Doctoral Studies

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences