

Evaluation of PhD students at Graduate School of Health, Aarhus University

Legislation on evaluation of PhD student

According to the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme at the Universities (PhD order) the University is obliged to assess whether the PhD student follows the PhD plan. The assessment shall be based on an opinion from the main supervisor who, after having consulted the PhD student, shall confirm that the PhD programme is following the PhD plan or justify in writing why adjustments are required. The PhD student shall be given the opportunity to submit his or her comments on the opinion within a deadline. In the assessment, the university shall take full account of periods of documented illness, maternity/paternity leave and other approved leave. It is the university who determines the internal rules on the frequency of evaluation.

Purpose of evaluation

The evaluation of the PhD student and his/her project should focus on the collaboration with the main supervisor, whether the PhD study follows the PhD plan, project feasibility, project progression and on collaboration with international / external parties.

The evaluation form

The evaluation of ordinary 3-year PhD programme PhD students at The Graduate School of Health consists of three evaluations.

1. A written evaluation after 6 months of full-time study (in PhD Planner)
2. A midterm evaluation after 18 months of full-time study consisting of
 - a. A written Scientific Report (uploaded in PhD Planner)
 - b. A written evaluation by the PhD student (in PhD Planner)
 - c. An oral evaluation with the main supervisor and an evaluator appointed by the main supervisor
 - d. A written evaluation by the main supervisor (in PhD Planner)
3. A written evaluation after 30 months of full-time study (in PhD Planner)

The individual evaluations are described below.

The written 6 month evaluation (first evaluation)

The written 6-month evaluation is carried out in the PhD Planner. The PhD student starts by filling out/updating the elements in the PhD plan. Then the PhD student answers a set of questions related to the first evaluation. The PhD student has to indicate in PhD Planner, whether he/she expects the plan to

lead to timely completion or whether he/she is concerned. The PhD student forwards the evaluation to the main supervisor in PhD Planner. Thereafter the main supervisor has access to both the updated PhD plan and the filled in evaluation. He/she then has to answer a set of questions in relation to the first evaluation. The main supervisor also has to indicate whether he/she expects the plan to lead to timely completion or whether he/she is concerned. When the evaluation is completed the main supervisor forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his or hers comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of graduate programme(GP) for approval.

Focus for the 6 month evaluation is on:

- Successful project progression
- The PhD students ability to conduct post graduate research
- Plans for stay in other research groups/companies/abroad
- Plans for teaching and knowledge dissemination

A positive outcome

If the PhD student passes the evaluation he or she is entitled to continue the PhD studies. After approval of the evaluation the PhD planner will be available for the PhD student to make running updates in the PhD plan until the next evaluation deadline.

A negative outcome

If there is concern about the progression of the PhD programme the PhD student will be offered a “three month study restoration period”. The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study. At the end of the study restoration period the main supervisor re-evaluates the student. The supervisor forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his/her comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of GP for approval. If the re-evaluation is negative, the student will be expelled from the PhD programme. The Graduate School of Health will inform any other employer(s) of the expulsion without delay. The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study.

The midterm evaluation

The midterm evaluation concludes the first half of the PhD study. The purpose of the evaluation is dual. Firstly the evaluation serves as a status of the project and the student’s development and thus to ensure that learning outcomes for doctoral education are well on the way to be achieved. Secondly the evaluation should warrant the general feasibility of the project leading to a PhD degree, and provide the student an opportunity to get a second opinion and feedback on the project. The midterm evaluation is carried out in the PhD Planner and as an oral evaluation.

The evaluation is comprised of:

- A written Scientific Report (uploaded in PhD Planner)
- A written evaluation by the PhD student (in PhD Planner)

- An oral evaluation with the main supervisor and an evaluator appointed by the main supervisor
- A written evaluation by the main supervisor (in PhD Planner)

The scientific report is uploaded as a PDF-file in PhD Planner along with the written evaluation. The oral evaluation takes place for an evaluator appointed by the main supervisor, along with the main supervisor and preferably all the co-supervisors.

The evaluator

The evaluator is appointed by the main supervisor.

Please note that the evaluator *must* be at associate professor level or higher, and *must not*:

1. have previously supervised the student, for example on a thesis project
2. be co-author of articles/manuscripts forming parts of the dissertation
3. recently (within the past three years) have co-published with the main supervisor or the student

The main supervisor inform the evaluator of the following:

- The evaluator must fill out the form “Form for oral midterm evaluation (PhD)”
- The evaluator must forward the evaluation form to the head of the graduate programme with cc’ to the Graduate School and the main supervisor no later than a week after the oral evaluation.

It is highly recommended that the co-supervisors attend the oral evaluation, along with the main supervisor, and be willing to answer questions regarding their role in the project and possible deviations from the original PhD study plan.

Information on the upcoming evaluation

Two months prior to the deadline for submission of the scientific report and completion of the PhD student’s part of the midterm evaluation the PhD student will receive a notification by email. The PhD student and the main supervisor are in unison responsible for making arrangements with the evaluator, including booking a suitable room for the midterm evaluation. The oral evaluation has to take place within 2 months of the submission of the scientific report.

In the case of maternity/paternity leave, and sickness and the midterm evaluation will be postponed accordingly. Postponement of the midterm-exam does not prolong the total study time.

The Scientific Report

The Scientific Report is comprised of approx. 5 pages. It is uploaded as a PDF-file in PhD Planner at least 2 weeks before the oral midterm evaluation.

The Scientific Report must include a “State of the Art” description (1-2 pages) of the research area at hand describing the present international scientific knowledge including references to recent relevant scientific literature. Furthermore, the report must encompass a status of the supervised research project

including provisional results, a discussion of these and a discussion of the research plans for the remaining PhD study period. Any publications resulting from the PhD student's own work must be listed.

The statement on the status of the PhD plan, including a status on whether the student has stayed with/collaborated with other research groups, a status of teaching, and of post-graduate research plans are given, is written as part of the evaluation in PhD Planner.

The PhD student has to consider in PhD Planner, whether he/she expects the plan to lead to timely completion or whether he/she is concerned.

The Purpose of the Midterm Evaluation

The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to ensure that the learning outcomes for doctoral education are well on the way to be achieved. The evaluation should warrant the general feasibility of the project leading to a PhD degree, and provide the student an opportunity to obtain a second hand opinion and feedback on the project from the evaluator.

The evaluation of the PhD student's performance and ability to conclude the PhD project is based on both the written Scientific Report and the oral evaluation.

The oral evaluation takes its starting point in a 20 minutes presentation on key topics from the scientific report. The subsequent discussion and evaluation should focus on the report and the presentation, including a discussion of methods as well as the wider thematic framework. At the end of the evaluation, there should be a discussion of the PhD student's plans for completion of the PhD study and career plans. In total 60 min is appropriate.

The result

The result of the midterm evaluation is either pass or fail. The decision is made immediately after the midterm evaluation by the main supervisor.

After the midterm evaluation the main supervisor must fill out the written midterm evaluation in PhD Planner, based on the PhD student's PhD plan, evaluation, scientific report and oral evaluation. When the evaluation is completed the main supervisor forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his or her comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of GP for approval.

A positive outcome

If the PhD student passes the midterm evaluation he/she is entitled to continue the PhD studies. After approval of the evaluation the PhD planner will be available for the PhD student to make running updates in the PhD plan until the next evaluation deadline.

A negative outcome

If the PhD student does not pass the midterm evaluation, the PhD student will be offered a "three month study restoration period". The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study. At the end of the study restoration period the main supervisor re-evaluates the student. The supervisor

forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his/her comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of GP for approval. If the re-evaluation is negative, the student will be expelled from the PhD programme. The Graduate School of Health will inform any other employer(s) of the expulsion without delay. The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study.

The written 30 month evaluation (third evaluation)

The written 30-month evaluation is carried out in the PhD Planner. The PhD student starts by filling out/updating the elements in the PhD plan. Then the PhD student answers a set of questions related to the first evaluation. The PhD student has to indicate in PhD Planner, whether he/she expects the plan to lead to timely completion or whether he/she is concerned. The PhD student forwards the evaluation to the main supervisor in PhD Planner. Thereafter the main supervisor has access to both the updated PhD plan and the filled in evaluation. He/she then has to answer a set of questions in relation to the first evaluation. The main supervisor also has to indicate whether he/she expects the plan to lead to timely completion or whether he/she is concerned. When the evaluation is completed the main supervisor forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his or hers comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of graduate programme(GP) for approval.

Focus for the 30 month evaluation is on;

- Whether the PhD dissertation will be handed in on time
- Student progression
- Stays with other research groups/abroad
- Whether the project follows the PhD Plan
- Whether the student has conducted teaching/lecturing/public dissemination
- Plans for post graduate career

A positive outcome

If the PhD student passes the evaluation he or she is entitled to continue the PhD studies. After approval of the evaluation the PhD planner will be available for the PhD student to make running updates in the PhD plan until the closure of the plan in connection with the submission of PhD dissertation.

A negative outcome

If there is concern about the progression of the PhD programme the PhD student will be offered a “three month study restoration period”. The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study. At the end of the study restoration period the main supervisor re-evaluates the student. The supervisor forwards the evaluation to the PhD student in PhD Planner and the PhD student has 2 weeks to submit his/her comments to the evaluation before it is automatically forwarded to the head of GP for approval. If the re-evaluation is negative, the student will be expelled from the PhD programme. The Graduate School of Health will inform any other employer(s) of the expulsion without delay. The study restoration period does not extend the total time of study.