



Instruction on Doctoral Studies

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Chapter 1. General

1 Legal basis and scope of application

Doctoral studies at Åbo Akademi University are arranged in accordance with the Universities Act (558/2009) as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture Decree on the Specification of Educational Responsibilities (1451/2014). In addition to the Universities Act and other legislative provisions, Åbo Akademi University applies the Administrative Instruction for Åbo Akademi University, the University Instruction on Ethics and the Responsible Conduct of Research and other instructions approved by the University Board of Åbo Akademi University. This Instruction on Doctoral Studies is subordinate to the Administrative Instruction in the hierarchy of norms at Åbo Akademi University. More detailed guidance is given in the Regulation on Doctoral Studies as well as other regulations, rules and instructions.

This Instruction provides for the academic and professional postgraduate degrees completed at Åbo Akademi University. These are hereinafter referred to as doctoral degrees. This Instruction also provides for the manner in which the conferral ceremony shall be held.

Chapter 2. Educational responsibility and educational structure

2 Educational responsibility according to field of education and degree

The Regulation on Education Responsibility stipulates the education responsibility of Åbo Akademi University by faculty, degree, doctoral programme titles and any area of specialisation as well as main subject.

Education may be provided jointly with a Finnish university in such a manner that the degree is completed at the home university. Education may also be provided in such a manner that it leads to one or more degrees jointly with one or more foreign universities. In such cases, this involves either a joint degree with a certificate from only the home university or a double degree with multiple certificates issued by the home university and at least one foreign university.

The Dean examines proposals for establishing an agreement concerning the issuing of a joint or double degree to a given doctoral researcher. If the Dean recommends the establishment of such an agreement, a request concerning the final decision is submitted to the Rector. The Rector is responsible for establishing agreements with other universities.

3 Educational structure and targeted study time

A doctoral degree includes coursework of at least 30 ECTS credits or at most 40 ECTS credits and a doctoral dissertation. The faculties decide on the number of credits (30 ECTS or 40 ECTS) required for the doctoral degree. The targeted study period is 3-4 years.

If a licentiate degree is completed prior to the doctoral degree, the licentiate degree includes coursework of at least 30 ECTS credits or at most 40 ECTS credits and a licentiate thesis. The targeted study period is 2 years. The subsequent doctoral degree includes a doctoral dissertation. The targeted study period is 1-2 years. If there is a change of major between the licentiate degree and the doctoral degree, coursework of 30 ECTS credits or 40 ECTS credits and a doctoral dissertation are required.

Chapter 3. Language

1 Language in doctoral studies

The language of instruction, examination and administration at Åbo Akademi University is Swedish. The faculties render decisions on the use of languages other than Swedish as the language of instruction or examination.

Doctoral dissertations or licentiate theses are written in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian or English. Theses in the subject of Finnish language or a foreign language as well as in Finnish or foreign language didactics may be written in the language in question. Under specific circumstances, the Faculty Board may grant permission to use another language for the thesis.

Licentiate theses and doctoral dissertations written in monograph form are subjected to a language revision by the Centre for Language and Communication.

2 Public examination of the doctoral dissertation

Doctoral dissertations are defended at a public defense.

Chapter 4. Doctoral degree

1 Completion of a doctoral degree

A doctoral researcher may complete a doctoral degree after completing the portion of the doctoral studies specified by the faculty in an agreement, completing a doctoral dissertation and publicly defending it.

If the doctoral researcher is completing a double degree with certificates to be issued by multiple universities, the mandated examination of the dissertation is done at Åbo Akademi University before any certificate is issued.

2 Completion of a Doctor of Philosophy degree

In addition to humanities and sciences, a Doctor of Philosophy degree can be completed in all fields of study at Åbo Akademi University in which doctoral studies are available.

A Doctor of Philosophy degree may always be awarded when the doctoral researcher so desires. If a doctoral researcher lacks either a bachelor's or master's degree for their prior studies in the main subject (or an entity comparable to the main subject) in which the student intends to complete a doctoral degree, the doctoral researcher may choose to complete a Doctor of Philosophy degree in the same field of study that the degree is completed.

Chapter 5. Miscellaneous provisions

1 Honorary Doctorates

The Faculty Board confers no more than three Honorary Doctorates per faculty for each conferral ceremony. The Rector may also propose the conferral of two Honorary Doctorates for faculties for each conferral ceremony.

2 Entry into force

This Instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2025, replacing the previous Instruction on Doctoral Studies at Åbo Akademi University (which was approved by the University Board on 19 December 2017).