

Procedure at the Public Defense of Doctoral Theses

Department of Economic History, Lund University

The chair at the public defense (who in most cases will be the PhD candidate's supervisor) opens the meeting by introducing the candidate, the examiner (*opponent*) and the examination committee. The remaining procedure is as follows:

- The candidate starts by drawing attention to any essential matters concerning the thesis that need to be pointed out. Printing errors and similar minor points should not be taken up here, since these can be more suitably included in a printed list of errata that is made available to those attending the defense.
- The examiner then gives a summary of the thesis. This presentation normally contains a general review of the central research questions and the main results. It should include an overview of the different parts of the thesis, but should not go into lengthy details. The total length of time for this presentation is normally around 20 minutes. It should also be kept in mind that some of the audience are not experts, which means that it is appreciated if at least some parts of the presentation can be understood by non-experts.
- Then follows the main part of the public defense, where the thesis is discussed in detail. There are various ways of doing this, of which the most common is to discuss the thesis chapter by chapter, but it is up to the examiner to decide what is most appropriate given the structure and content of the thesis. The examiner should comment on a certain part of the thesis (for example a chapter) and then ask the candidate specific questions. It is imperative that there is a dialogue between the examiner and PhD candidate at this point. This part of the defense also serves as a check that the candidate understands problems that are related to the thesis. It is crucial that the PhD candidate is given the opportunity to speak and has the ability to actively participate in the dialogue. It is important that the discussion is organized in such a way that serious, weighty criticisms regarding the methodology being used and the validity of the results should be presented first, and that minor matters concerning style, obvious printing errors and similar matters should come later on. This part of the defense normally takes about one hour, but the examiner has full discretion over how much time is spent here.
- Preferably, the examiner concludes by giving his/her general impression of the thesis in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. This part will only take a few minutes.
- The chair then takes charge of the meeting and gives the examination committee an opportunity to ask questions. It is highly appreciated if each member of the examination committee takes an active part in the discussion. The chair then gives the audience a similar opportunity to ask questions.
- Finally, the chair closes the meeting.

The examining committee meets immediately afterwards. The examiner and supervisor(s) attend and take part in the deliberations, but have no vote on the decision. The examination committee may ask the examiner for his or her candid evaluation of the thesis. This meeting usually lasts for about 15 minutes. The thesis is graded as Pass or Fail.

Practical information about the Public Defense

Slide shows etc.: The examiner can use power point or similar presentations or use the whiteboard to illustrate his/her points. Any requests for technical support should be made in advance to the chair (if the examiner is unsure who will be the chairperson then this request can be made to the main supervisor who will pass on the information).

Dress code: There are no formal dress requirements at the meeting, but normally the chair, examiner, PhD candidate and the examination committee are somewhat dressed up for the occasion. For men it is common to wear a suit or jacket.

Reimbursement: The department will cover the examiner's accommodation in Lund and reasonable travel costs. In addition, the examiner will receive a symbolic remuneration of SEK 8,000 (subject to income tax at different rates depending on nationality, but usually 20% for foreign residents). Members of the examination committee will be compensated for their travel costs and, where necessary, accommodation in Lund.

To speed up the reimbursement process the examiner should send a copy of his/her passport to Anneli Nilsson Ahlm (anneli.nilsson_ahlm@ekh.lu.se) together with the following information:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Tax registration number
- Name of bank
- Bank account number
- Clearing number (only Swedish banks)
- Swift address (8n or 11 (BIC) signs)
- IBAN number (only within Europe)
- ABA-, RTG-, or FW-number, 9digits (only USA)

Travel to Lund: Lund is close to Copenhagen Airport which has daily connections with major European cities. (<http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/about/visit-lund-university>).