

## **Chairperson's instructions for PhD defence proceedings at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences**

Regarding the actual defence, the following appears in the PhD Ministerial Order (chapter 8):

*(Text in italics is left out)*

The Doctoral School of Social Sciences' internal rules regarding the defence are as follows:

The department appoints a chairperson for the defence. It is the chairperson's responsibility that the defence is completed in accordance with the following guidelines:

The PhD defence must aim to have a duration of 3 hours including a break.

- The PhD student gets the opportunity to account for and present the results of the PhD thesis.
- The PhD student must elaborate his/her work in proportion to the subject selected by the assessment committee.
- Ensure that members of the assessment committee have a chance to ask questions.
- Others than the assessment committee's members get the chance to ask questions.
- The PhD student gets the necessary time to answer the questions.
- The total exam time (question time) must not exceed 2 hours.

There are not – aside from these guidelines – any established, uniform rules across the departments and research environments that are affiliated with the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at AAU. This means that there is room for variation as long as the timeframe and the additional considerations mentioned above are considered.

Below here is an example of a PhD defence programme. It is meant as a guiding principle rather than an instruction:

11:00-13:00: The assessment committee meets and has lunch with the chairperson. The chairperson uses this lunch to determine the order and possibly the internal work division between the committee's members, and points out the time limitation (maximum 1.5 hours). (It is not demanded that defences are conducted in the afternoon, but it often suits international members of an assessment committee, who will be able to get to Aalborg that very day).

13:00-13:05: The chairperson's welcome to the PhD defence. It is important to ensure that everyone understands the structure and the extent of the procedure, and knows their options for participation– among these: ask questions, etc. (see attached example of speech manuscript: welcome).

13:05-13:50: The PhD graduate presents based on the subject selected by the assessment committee.

13:50-14:05: Coffee break (The chairperson rounds off the first part of the defence, and points out that the chairperson will take questions in the break)

- 14:05-14:10: The chairperson gives the floor to the first opponent.
- 14:10-15:30: The first, the second and the third opponent have the floor. Questions and time for the PhD graduate's answers are controlled by the assessment committee, but the chairperson oversees that the examiners allot time for the questions to be answered.
- 15:30-16:00: The chairperson rounds off the formal opposition, and gives the audience the opportunity to ask questions. As a rule, the questions received in the break are used after the PhD graduate's presentation. If you wish to allow questions from the audience that are directly related to the opposition part of the PhD defence this should happen with consent from the PhD graduate.
- 16:00-16:05: The chairperson rounds off the defence and invites the members of the audience to a reception.
- 16:05-17:00: The chairperson gives the floor to the assessment committee and functions as the toastmaster during the reception.

#### **SPEECH MANUSCRIPT: WELCOME**

Welcome to ..... PhD defence at Aalborg University. My name is xxx, and I will function as the chairperson for this PhD defence.

During her/his PhD programme, XXXX has been associated with ..... which is a part of the department of ....., and she/he has been enrolled at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences.

Today XXXX will be defending her/his PhD thesis with the following title:

Xxxxxxx

The PhD thesis has already been positively assessed by the assessment committee. The assessment committee consists of professor alpha, professor beta, and professor gamma whom is the committee's chairperson.

The committee has asked xxxx to elaborate her/his work based on the subject: zzzzz.

After the defence, the assessment committee must decide whether or not it can recommend that XXXX is conferred the PhD degree.

The defence will proceed as follows: XXXX has 45 minutes to present and elaborate her/his work in proportion to the selected subject. After the presentation, there will be a coffee break where I will ask those of you who have questions for XXXX's work, in relation to this defence, to address me.

After the coffee break it is the examiners' turn to ask questions for XXXX. The first opponent is professor beta. At the end, professor gamma will have the floor. After this, the floor is given to potential inquirers of the audience.

The formal part of the defence is finalised around 16:00. Afterwards, the department hosts a reception while the assessment committee assembles. All members of the audience are welcome to participate and await the committee's assessment.

With this, I hereby give the floor to: xxxx