Instructions for the examining committee at a licentiate seminar

The members of the examining committee must have a doctoral degree and must be academically qualified university teachers/researchers. At least one of the members is to have the equivalent of the qualifications required for appointment to a readership/associate professorship, or be a professor. No more than one member of the examining committee may come from the department in which the student has conducted his/her research. There is no requirement for any member to come from another seat of learning. All committee members are to be broadly familiar with the content of the licentiate thesis from a scientific point of view.

Disqualification

There must be no grounds for disqualification of the members of the examining committee in respect of supervisors, the author of the thesis or the project. See http://www.codex.vr.se. For example, members of the examining committee may not be conducting ongoing research with or have co-published with the author of the thesis or any of the supervisors within the past 5 years. If an examining committee member has supervised any of the doctoral student’s supervisors, this must have occurred more than ten years ago. Such a situation ought to be avoided. Written justification is required if a former doctoral student or supervisor is to be appointed as a member of the examining committee.

Licentiate seminar

The examining committee’s task is to review and examine the licentiate thesis and its defence. The national qualitative targets for third-cycle courses and study programmes described in the högskoleförordningen (SFS 1993:100) (Sweden’s Higher Education Ordinance) are to form the basis of this examination. Consequently, the purpose of some of the examining committee’s questions ought to be to identify how the national objectives have been achieved (see below).

The following points are to be assessed:
- Clarity in the described purpose and questions posed
- Whether or not adequate methods have been used
- Relevance, originality and novelty
- Whether or not adequate interpretation and discussion of the scientific results has been carried out
- If the national qualitative targets have been met.

Suggestions for questions for the examination of the defence:
- Does the author of the thesis show evidence of knowledge and understanding of the research field?
- Does the author of this thesis demonstrate mastery of the literature?
- Is the author of the thesis participating actively in academic debate?
- Does the author of the thesis handle questions and criticism in a factual and appropriate manner, regardless of how the questioner has posed the question?
- Can the author of the thesis reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of his/her own work?
- Can the author of the thesis place his/her results in a broader academic and medical context?

**Examining committee meeting**

The examining committee convenes directly after the licentiate seminar. The external reviewer, the chair for the licentiate seminar, and the main supervisor all have the right to attend this meeting and participate in the deliberations, but not in the decision. The examining committee may, if necessary, co-opt assistant supervisors to the meeting. The examining committee then appoints a chairperson from within the group. At the meeting, the external reviewer is given the opportunity to provide his/her opinion on the licentiate thesis, and the doctoral student’s ability to respond to questions and to conduct a line of academic argument. The external reviewer also has the chance to ask the supervisor additional questions about the licentiate thesis work. The supervisor is asked to give is/her opinion of the independence achieved by the doctoral student and his/her contribution to the licentiate thesis work.

**Grade**
A single grade is set for the licentiate thesis and its defence: pass or fail. In grading the thesis and its defence, both the content of the licentiate thesis and its public defence are to be taken into account. The grade that the majority of the examining committee agree on shall apply. Where the examining committee is not unanimous in its decision on the grade to be applied, reasons must always be given and a protest may be registered where applicable. If the licentiate thesis is failed, the reasons must always be given.

The chair of the examining committee is responsible for the author of the thesis being notified of the examining committee’s decision directly after its meeting has concluded. A record of the examining committee meeting including any attachments (reasons for the decision) are to submitted as soon as possible after the licentiate seminar to the Department’s administrator for third-cycle courses and programmes. The administrator sends this documentation to the Registrar at Umeå University.

**National qualitative targets**

**Licentiate**

**Knowledge and understanding**

*Objective:* Demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the area of research, including up-to-date specialist knowledge within a defined part of this area.

*Objective:* In-depth knowledge of scientific methodology in general and the methods used in the specific area of research in particular.

**Competence and skills**

*Objective:* Demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate questions and to plan and use adequate methods to carry out a defined piece of research and other qualified tasks critically, independently and creatively, with scientific exactitude and within specified time limits, thereby making a contribution to the body of knowledge; and to evaluate his/her own work.

*Objective:* Demonstrate the ability to present and discuss research and research results in national and international contexts, both orally and in writing, in dialogue with the scientific community and the community in general.

*Objective:* Demonstrate the skills required to participate independently in research and development work, and to work independently in other skilled activities.

**Judgement and approach**
Objective: Demonstrate the ability to make ethical judgements in his/her own research

Objective: Show an awareness of the possibilities and limitations of science and its role in society and human responsibility for how it is used.

Objective: Demonstrate the ability to identify his/her needs for additional knowledge and to be responsible for the development of his/her own knowledge.