



DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN LAW

GENERAL REGULATIONS 2024-2027

1. Aims of postgraduate studies

According to the Government Decree on University Degrees (1039/2013) Section 21, the objective of postgraduate studies is that the doctoral researcher

- 1) becomes well-versed in his/her own field of research and its social significance;
- 2) gains knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific research methods independently and critically and to produce new scientific knowledge within his/her field of research;
- 3) becomes conversant with the development, basic problems and research methods of his/her own field of research;
- 4) gains such knowledge of the general theory of science and of other disciplines relating to his/her own field of research as enables him/her to follow developments in them;
- 5) gains sufficient communication and language skills and other necessary skills in order to work in extensive and demanding expert and development roles and in international collaborative settings.

A postgraduate degree provides additional qualifications for several different legal expert positions. These include, in addition to the traditional academic teaching and research positions, for instance jobs in national and international legislative drafting, judge and prosecutor posts as well as specialist jobs in public administration, economic life and legal aid.

2. Doctoral degree in law

Postgraduate degrees in law include the degrees of Doctor of Laws and Licentiate of Laws.

According to the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004), in order to be awarded a doctorate, the doctoral researcher must complete the required postgraduate studies, demonstrate independent and critical thinking in the field of research, and write a doctoral dissertation and defend it in public. The Doctor of Laws degree is meant for individuals who are either interested in pursuing a career in research or planning to pursue specialist careers. The standard time reserved for the completion of the degree is from three to four years of fulltime studying.

Since the 1st of August 2011, the Faculty of Law at the University of Turku has only granted study rights for doctoral degree. The Faculty of Law may grant on special grounds and based on the supervisor's statement a study right for licentiate degree for those who have been granted a right to study for a doctoral degree.

3. Doctoral Programme in Law

The University of Turku has a Graduate School that encompasses the entire university. It aims to provide systematic, high-quality and supervised doctoral training within a controlled time frame. The Graduate School coordinates doctoral training at the University of Turku. Its academic structure and working methods meet the recommendations on the development of doctoral training given by the Academy of Finland. The Graduate School comprises the doctoral programmes provided by the faculties.



The doctoral programme provided by the Faculty of Law is called the Doctoral Programme in Law. All the doctoral researchers admitted to pursue a Doctor of Laws degree at the Faculty of Law participate in this programme. The Faculty of Law may also collaborate with other doctoral programmes.

The Director and the Board of the Doctoral Programme are responsible for running the programme.

4. Application procedure

4.1. Right to pursue a Doctor of Laws degree

The right to pursue a Doctor of Laws degree is granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Law based on the proposition of the Board of the Doctoral Programme in Law.

The Dean may grant the right to anyone who has earned a Bachelor of Laws, Master of Laws, Master of International and Comparative Law or Licentiate of Laws degree in Finland or a Master of Social Sciences degree at the University of Turku if the applicant is otherwise considered suitable to pursue a doctoral degree.

An applicant with a foreign law degree comparable to a Bachelor of Laws or Master of Laws degree or some other Master's degree completed either in Finland or abroad, is required to prove that their degree gives them the capability to participate in the postgraduate studies in Law. If the applicant's degree does not correspond to a Bachelor of Laws or a Master of Laws degree, the right to participate in postgraduate studies is granted only for a cogent reason.

4.2. Application process

The Doctoral Programme in Law invites applications for a study right twice a year.

Before submitting an application, a person applying for doctoral studies must discuss personally with the person or people proposed as their personal supervisor. The applicant must present to the supervisor their preliminary research plan, study plan, funding plan and the working plan, and schedule of the dissertation and then amend them on the basis of the discussions, if necessary. The applicant must attach to the application a notice of consent from one supervisor who meets the criteria of the Faculty.

Instructions for submitting an application and information about the application periods can be found at: <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/utuqs/doctoral-programme-in-law/admission>

4.3. Evaluation criteria for accepting doctoral researchers

When the Board of the doctoral programme evaluates applicant's capability to complete the degree, it considers the following criteria:

- academic attractiveness, importance and feasibility of the research plan,
- sufficiently wide-ranging knowledge of the research on the applicant's field manifested in the research plan and methodological approach,
- possible academic publications,
- the merits and grade of the Master's thesis and possible postgraduate degree thesis in Law,
- previous studies in law, their content and level if the applicant has a degree other than a Master of Laws degree,



- connection between the research project and the Faculty's focus in research, and
- other merits such as relevant professional experience.

5. Supervisor and supervisory group

A doctoral researcher has, in general, two personal supervisors. In connection with granting the study right, the Dean appoints a main supervisor for the doctoral researcher. The second supervisor will be appointed within a year from granting the study right. If the doctoral researcher gives his/her consent, the Dean may decide that, for a justified reason, only one supervisor will be assigned to the doctoral researcher.

The person appointed as a main supervisor must be a Professor, Associate Professor or a Docent in the Faculty or employed by the Faculty of Law. The other supervisor can be in addition to the previous a person that holds a doctoral degree from the Faculty of Law, another Faculty at the University of Turku or from another university. However, at least one supervisor must be employed by the Faculty of Law at the University of Turku.

In order to ensure the quality of supervision, it is recommended that one supervisor has no more than 5-7 supervisees, if there is no special reason for exceeding this limit.

If necessary, the supervisor(s) can be changed or a new supervisor appointed for the doctoral researcher.

Each doctoral researcher funded by UTUGS or the doctoral programme, employed in a research project or working as a grantee full-time will be appointed a supervisory group consisting of the supervisor(s) and 2 to 3 individuals with a Doctor's degree. The supervisory group is appointed by the Board of the Doctoral Programme. The supervisory group supports the work of the doctoral researcher and supervisors. If necessary, the supervisory group or its composition can be changed. For others, a supervisory group may be appointed at the request of the doctoral researcher. If the doctoral researcher's funding period ends and they no longer work on their doctoral dissertation full time, the supervisory group activities may be terminated.

Supervision will be carried out with regard to the Principles of Good Supervision. The principles are available at <https://www.utu.fi/en/research/utugs/doctoral-programme-in-law/for-the-doctoral-researcher>

→ Supervision

6. Structure of the doctoral degree

The postgraduate studies in the Doctoral Programme in Law consist of doctoral dissertation and 40 credits. The curriculum for three years is accepted by the Faculty Council.

Requirements regarding doctoral dissertation and postgraduate studies are published in the electronic study guide.

6.1 Compensation and inclusion of studies

A doctoral researcher may request to compensate studies belonging to the doctoral programme with national or international university-level studies if their quality and extent corresponds to those of the doctoral programme. However, such studies may not be a part of a degree that the doctoral researcher has already completed. The doctoral dissertation cannot be compensated. The doctoral



researcher may also include university-level studies done in Finland or abroad in the optional studies of the doctoral programme.

The director of the doctoral programme decides on the compensation of obligatory studies, whereas the inclusion of optional studies is determined by doctoral researcher's supervisor.

The compensation of obligatory studies and inclusion of the optional studies can be requested with an electronic application form in the UGIS system.

7. Monitoring the work progress

7.1 Annual reporting

As a part of the monitoring of the work progress each doctoral researcher submits an electronic annual report by the informed deadline. In the annual report, the doctoral researcher estimates how their doctoral studies and work on the doctoral dissertation have progressed during the previous year. The report is processed as a part of the annual evaluation.

Submitting the report is a prerequisite for keeping the study right active and, for instance, for applying for travel grants.

7.2 Supervisory groups

The role of the supervisory group is to monitor and support the progress of the doctoral researcher's work annually during the spring semester.

For the first evaluation, the doctoral researcher submits for the supervisory group their research plan, the scheduling of the research and the texts that they have produced so far.

For the following evaluations the doctoral researcher submits the texts that they have produced during the evaluation year, regardless of their degree of readiness. The doctoral researcher can inform the supervisory group which texts they prefer them to concentrate.

The supervisory group arranges a feedback discussion in the spring semester with the doctoral researcher and all the members of the supervisory group. In the feedback discussion the supervisory group and the doctoral researcher discuss the texts provided by the doctoral researcher and his/her working plan for the next year. The group makes a memo of the feedback discussion and submits it to the Board of the doctoral programme.

8. Graduation

8.1. Preliminary Examination and the Permission to Defend the Dissertation

After consulting with the supervisor(s), or the supervisory group, a doctoral researcher starts the pre-examination process by using an electronic form found in the UGIS system. The form must include an electronic version of the dissertation. The studies included in the doctoral degree should, as a rule, be completed before the manuscript is submitted for preliminary examination. In case the studies are not completed, the doctoral researcher should present a plan for completing their studies to the Doctoral Programme in Law.

The supervisor conducts the electronic check-up by using the plagiarism detection program provided by the university. Additional information can be found in <https://www.utu.fi/en/fairutu>. The



supervisor or the supervisors make a proposal to the Faculty for appointing pre-examiners by using an electronic form found in the UGIS system. The proposal must include a plagiarism check certificate. The supervisor must ask for a consent from those proposed for the task in the application and agree with potential other supervisors about starting the pre-examination process. The doctoral researcher is offered an opportunity to give a statement about the appointment of the proposed pre-examiners. The Faculty recommends that for at least one of the pre-examiners is docent or has equivalent scientific qualifications.

The Faculty appoints at least two pre-examiners for the study. The pre-examiners are given a time frame of two months in which to complete the preliminary examination.

The pre-examiners must make a well-founded statement on whether the dissertation

1. is of the quality and scope of the work that the doctoral researcher can be expected to produce as a result of three to four years of full-time doctoral studies
2. provides relevant new knowledge in the field of its research,
3. is written on a scientifically interesting and meaningful topic, and the research question and its delimitation are adequately defined,
4. is otherwise of such quality and presentation that it or its sub-publications have been or could be published as such or in revised form in a peer-reviewed scientific journal,
5. demonstrates that the doctoral researcher has a deep understanding of his/her research field and its relevance to society,
6. demonstrates that the doctoral researcher has an understanding of the development of their discipline, its key issues and scientific methods, and has used these methods independently and critically,
7. demonstrate that the doctoral researcher is well equipped for independent and critical scientific work and the production of new knowledge, and
8. demonstrate that the doctoral researcher is aware of and complies with research ethical standards.

A pre-examiner cannot give a conditional statement. The doctoral researcher is offered an opportunity to respond to the pre-examiners' statements.

After receiving the statements of the pre-examiners, the Faculty Board decides whether or not permission to defend the dissertation will be granted. If permission is not granted, the pre-examination process ends. The doctoral researcher can restart the process by reapplying for permission.

8.2. Opponent and Custos

The supervisor makes a proposal to the Faculty for the appointments of the Opponent(s) and the Custos by using an electronic form available in the UGIS system. The supervisor cannot act as the Opponent. If there is a good reason, two opponents may be appointed. The Faculty recommends that the Opponent would be Professor, Docent or would have equivalent scientific qualifications.

The Custos is the supervisor of the doctoral candidate or a Professor or a person with doctoral degree of the discipline or of a related field. The Faculty appoints the person who has consented to the appointment.

8.3. Distribution of the Dissertation



Before the public examination, the doctoral researcher has to deliver the dissertation for public distribution, published in print or electronically.

The University of Turku recommends that all dissertations are produced electronically and published in the publishing archive of the university.

For the instructions, please see

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

/Publishing and printing doctoral dissertation

The copies submitted to the university must be in the format of a dissertation. A separate title page containing information about the time and place of the public dissertation and the fact that the publication is an academic dissertation, approved by the Faculty of Law to be publicly published, is attached to the dissertation.

According to the Rector's decision (5 November 2013), the dissertation must always include a summary both in Finnish and in English, regardless of the language the dissertation is written in. In addition to summaries in Finnish and English, a summary in some other language can be included in the dissertation.

8.4. Communicating about the public examination

The doctoral researcher must follow the general guidelines set by the University of Turku (<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>).

/ Communicating about the doctoral dissertation

8.5. Public examination

For the practical arrangements the doctoral researcher is requested to contact the Faculty Office Assistant early on.

The public examination follows the general guidelines set by the University of Turku

<https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines>

8.6. Evaluating and Approving the Dissertation

The task of the opponent is to present the Faculty Board, within four weeks of the public examination, with a statement recommending either the approval or rejection of the dissertation. The opponent must justifiably evaluate the quality of the dissertation. The statement of the opponent should evaluate

1. the quality, scope and presentation of the doctoral dissertation,
2. how relevant new knowledge in the field of its research the dissertation offers,
3. whether the dissertation is written on a scientifically interesting and meaningful topic, and the research question and its delimitation are adequately defined,
4. whether the dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral researcher has a deep understanding of his/her research field and its relevance to society,
5. how well the dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral researcher has an understanding of the development of their discipline, its key issues and scientific methods, and has used these methods independently and critically,
6. does the dissertation demonstrate that the doctoral researcher is well equipped for independent and critical scientific work and the production of new knowledge,



7. how well the doctoral researcher is aware of and complies with research ethical standards, and
8. how well the doctoral researcher defended their thesis in the public defence

The Faculty Board will decide on the approval of the dissertation based on the Opponent's statement.

9. Transitional regulations

A doctoral researcher may complete their doctoral studies in accordance with the curriculum of their starting year for four years. However, the dissertation must always correspond to the requirements imposed on the dissertation in the current curriculum at the time of acceptance.

If the doctoral researcher has not completed all doctoral studies required in the curriculum except of the dissertation within four years from the time of the start of the doctoral studies, the studies shall be completed in accordance with the current curriculum at each time. The Director of the Doctoral Programme decides at his discretion whether any or some of the course requirements can be replaced by previous performances.

The regulations of 2010-2011 apply to doctoral researchers who have been granted the study right for a Licentiate in Laws prior to the 1st of August 2011 otherwise, but following the decision of the Faculty Board (28 November 2017) the Dean decides on appointing the examiners of the licentiate thesis and approves the licentiate thesis, and the thesis is not defended in the licentiate seminar. The doctoral researcher must agree separately on the arrangements of the missing studies by discussing the substantial requirements and the modes of completing the studies with their supervisor and by drawing up a study plan for completing the Licentiate of Laws degree to be accepted by the doctoral programme.

A doctoral researcher with the Licentiate of Laws degree may choose to complete the postgraduate studies (40 credits) for the doctoral degree by compensating them from the degree of Licentiate of Law.