



Instructions for opponent Grading principles of a doctoral dissertation

The opponent has an important role in the public examination and grading of a dissertation. Based on the opponent's statement, the Faculty Council decides whether a dissertation is accepted or rejected, as well as the eventual grade of it.

In assessing the doctoral dissertation, the opponent is asked to provide a statement of evaluation on the following points:

- 1) the overall topic of the dissertation and its relevance to the discipline;
- 2) the originality of the research problem and the approaches taken to solve it;
- 3) the candidate's conduct of research, the methods used, and the development of new research methods and their applicability to the research in question; and
- 4) the structure of the dissertation, manner of presentation, style and language.

As a whole, the dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to contribute independently to scientific knowledge.

The opponent is asked to submit his or her signed statement to the Faculty in two weeks after the public examination, and the statement should include a proposal of the grade for the doctoral dissertation. In grading doctoral dissertations, the Faculty of Science and Forestry uses the scale **approved or approved with distinction**.

Approved with distinction is awarded only to dissertations that are scientifically and/ or experimentally of an excellent level. There are new findings in theory, scientific laws or models, and the results are very significant to the whole discipline. The presentation and structure of the dissertation form a well structured entity.

The grade **approved with distinction** requires that the dissertation falls in the category of top 5 % in its field, its results have international value and the observations and conclusions are new and clearly improve earlier understanding of the research topic. In this connection, it is important to clearly consider the candidate's independent contribution especially when the thesis was completed as a member of a research group. If the opponent suggests the grade 'approved with distinction' the summary of the merits, which support the best grade to be given, has to be included to the statement.