

## **The 4+4 PhD Study – points of attention**

The 4+4 scheme differs in many ways from the standard 5+3 PhD study. Both in terms of contents and because of the practical challenges you may encounter along the way. The following is a must-read for supervisors, heads of programmes and administrative staff involved in the 4+4 scheme. In the following we will present the (known) special circumstances you must be aware of and take into consideration when you decide to begin a 4+4 PhD study.

### **Practical circumstances regarding part A**

During the first two years (part A) the candidate is enrolled 50% as a master's student and 50% as a PhD student. The candidate must follow the study regulations for the master's education in question (unless an individual study plan is approved). The candidate must also follow the standard rules and regulations at the Doctoral School. A PhD plan containing information regarding the completion of the master's degree must be uploaded through PhD Manager after two months of enrolment. This timeframe applies even though 4+4 PhD students are only enrolled part time, for the first two years.

4+4 PhD-students are not employees during part A. They are students. It is very important to be aware of the consequences. Overall, it means that during part A the 4+4 PhD students do not have the rights and obligations of employees. In the following we will present some of the practical challenges that may arise when not being an employee.

### **Travel**

Travelling to conferences, courses and going abroad is an integral part of a PhD study. However, when you are not an employee there are certain aspects, you must be aware of.

- **Insurance.** 4+4 PhD students are not automatically covered by the university's travel insurance during part A. The head of department can decide to include the PhD student in the university's travel insurance. This means that the department accepts the financial cost of including the PhD student in the insurance scheme (as for employees). Contact the travel department directly to include the PhD student in the insurance.
- **Travel costs.** There are limits to the travel costs that the university can reimburse for non-employees. Only documented expenses can be covered e.g., flight/train/bus tickets, hotel. Per diem allowance is not possible. Also note, that the PhD student must pay taxes of expenses covered by the university when travelling in Denmark.

### **Access to printers, equipment etc.**

During part A the PhD student must have an access card to AAU. Through this you can give access to buildings, printers, laboratories etc. This is the same for all PhD students not employed at AAU.

### **Use of department cars**

It is not possible for non-employees to drive cars owned by the university. This may be solved if the department employs the PhD student for a limited number of hours. The category "timelønnet ph.d.-stipendiat" may be used or employment as a student worker.

### **Work obligation**

During part A the PhD student is not covered by the 840 hrs work obligation that applies to employed 5+3 PhD students. This means that the department cannot demand that the PhD

student performs tasks that are not included in the PhD plan e.g., teaching. If so, the department must employ the PhD student for a limited number of hours c.f. above re. employment categories. When entering part B, the PhD student will have a work obligation corresponding to 2/3 of 840 hrs.

### **Holiday**

During part A the candidate is not covered by the Holidays Act and is therefore not able to accrue holidays. Holiday should be agreed upon with the supervisor and notice should also be given to the department.

### **The contents of the 4+4 PhD study**

#### **Master's thesis exam/status seminar:**

After two years of study, an oral exam is held for the student to acquire the master's degree. The student's written work and oral presentation must be assessed according to the criteria for the master's thesis in the current curriculum. The examination also serves as a status seminar. Thus, the student must in his/her presentation explain the results obtained so far seen in a research context and present the plans for the remainder of the PhD project. In summary, the assessors for the thesis exam 1) assess written material and oral presentation according to the applicable curriculum and 2) evaluate written material and oral presentation according to the guidelines of the status seminar. In general, it is a good idea to inform the external examiner of the special nature of the exam. Most examiners should be familiar with this type of examination as the 4+4 model is not exclusive to AAU.

The master's thesis is the conclusion of the 1-year master's education that the student has undertaken simultaneously alongside the 1 year of the PhD study. In the end the scope and level of the PhD study must be the same as 5+3, i.e., 180 ECTS:

<b>MSc</b>
<b>PhD</b>



As can be seen from the figure, it is not a 4-year PhD, but a 3-year PhD stretched to 4-years because time is also spent finishing the last year of the master's study.

It is important that the timing of the master's thesis exam is correct. The exam must take place in the month of August two years after the enrolment date (1 September). When the PhD student passes the master's exam, he/she will receive a two-years employment contract from the following 1 of the month after the exam, i.e. from 1 September when the exam is scheduled in August. If the exam is scheduled for a previous date, e.g., in June like many other students, the PhD student will lose 2 months of the total study period because the employment contract will be from 1 July. The employment contract cannot be prolonged by the two months.

#### **Financial aspects going from part A to part B**

During part A the PhD student receives a SU-PhD scholarship which, like regular SU, is paid in advance. During part B the PhD student receives a salary which is paid in arrears. This means that

there will be a period of two months from the last payment of SU-PhD scholarship (1 August) to the first salary is paid (30 September). This is normal and something that all students experience when going from SU to salary.

### **Relation between master's thesis and PhD thesis**

Material from the master's thesis cannot be a part of the material used to assess the student for the PhD degree. However, elements from the master's exam thesis can be included in the PhD thesis if this is deemed relevant e.g., for obtaining a coherent/self-contained exposition. If material from the master's thesis is included in the PhD thesis, this must be properly referenced according to good scientific practice. It should also be explained in the preface of the PhD thesis how material from the master's thesis has been included.

### **Courses**

In addition to the courses that must be completed for the master's degree, the candidate must obtain 30 ECTS from courses during the PhD study. These must be courses on a PhD level and cannot overlap with the courses that are required for the master's degree.