



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Handbook for PhD students

<https://ugla.hi.is/kerfi/view/page.php?sid=3464>

Updated November 2018

Contents

Welcome to PhD studies at the Faculty of Medicine	1
General information for the academic year 2018-2019	1
Professor of research studies	1
Administrator of research studies	2
Office staff	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Office manager.....	2
Dean	2
Committee for Post-Graduate Studies	2
Student services	3
Facilities for students	3
Libraries	4
Reference managing software	4
Grants	4
PhD study programmes and courses	4
Courses at other universities (Guest studies).....	5
The doctoral research project.....	5
Advice and guidance for students.....	5
Supervisor and advisor.....	5
Doctoral committee	6
Change of advisor/supervisor	6
The role of the student	6
Statistics consultation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Student vaccinations.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Progress and progress reports	6
Leave from studies.....	7
Interim evaluation.....	7
Writing and delivering the PhD thesis.....	7
Handing in the PhD thesis for defense.....	7
The doctoral defense	8
Library books returned.....	9
Completed PhD theses from the Faculty of Medicine	9
Rules on PhD studies at the Faculty of Medicine.....	9

Welcome to PhD studies at the Faculty of Medicine

This handbook for PhD students brings together information, collected from various sources that should be useful for PhD students. Services provided are introduced and rules explained, such as timelimits, teacher-student interaction and preparation of the thesis. Further general information is available on the [UI website](#) and the websites of the [Faculty of Medicine](#) (FoM) and [School of Health Sciences](#). Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these websites. In addition, information about PhD studies at the School of Health Sciences can be found on [Ugla](#). The handbook is updated regularly. It is therefore important that teachers and students provide input and suggestions on content as well as presentation.

General information for the academic year 2018-2019

The office of the Faculty of Medicine is located on the 4th floor in Læknagarður, Vatnsmýrarvegur 16, tel. 525-4881, e-mail: medicine@hi.is. Opening hours are daily between 10 am and 4 pm. Information on staff contacts, courses etc. can be found on the [FoM website](#).

Rules on PhD studies and doctoral defence at the School of Health Sciences

Rules on PhD studies and doctoral defense at the School of Health Sciences and the procedures for the defense are governed by [Rules # 1252/2011](#), which are in accordance with the [university's standards](#) and requirements for doctoral programmes, and the general [rules for the University of Iceland # 569/2009](#). PhD studies at The School of Health Sciences have recently been awarded the Orpheus Label for PhD training, and thus fulfil the requirements described in [the Orpheus Standards](#). PhD studies consist of three years of academic and practical training (research studies), 180 ECTS, following completed MS degree or equivalent. Research experience and evidence of ability for independent studies can count towards qualification for admission.

The studies qualify for the award of the degree of philosophiae doctor, PhD. Normal length of study is three years (six terms) and maximum length is nine terms from enrolment. It is possible to enrol on a part-time basis. In this case at least half the number of study units for full study must be completed each academic year. Doctoral students are required to be registered and pay registration fees for the full duration of their studies. Studies for a PhD degree entail training in scientific methods by pursuing a research project so that he/she receives the appropriate preparation to become an independent scientist.

Chair of the Committee for Post-graduate Studies

[Ingibjörg Harðardóttir](#) is chairman of the Committee for Post-graduate studies. She is in charge of post-graduate studies at the FoM and represents the FoM in the Committee for Doctoral Studies at the School of Health Sciences. Appointments can be booked by sending a message to ih@hi.is or calling 525-4885.

Administrator of research studies

[Heiðrún Hlökkversdóttir](#) is the administrator of post-graduate studies. She takes care of general organisation of the PhD programme and progress reports. She is the first point of contact for students and teachers and directs matters as appropriate. Students are encouraged to contact her if they have any questions regarding their studies. Appointments can be booked by sending a message to rnn.laeknadeild@hi.is/ heidrunh@hi.is or calling 525/4864.

Representative of research studies

[Ingunn Baldursdóttir](#) is the person responsible for post-graduate studies at the Office of the Faculty of Medicine, including registration of study units, receiving applications for study and theses and communicating with the Student Registry. The office is open daily between 10 am and 4 pm and students can send questions to ib@hi.is or call 525-4881.

Office manager

[Erna Sigurðardóttir](#) is the manager of the Office of the Faculty of Medicine, ernas@hi.is

Dean

[Engilbert Sigurðsson](#) is the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, engilbs@landspitali.is
Ingibjörg Harðardóttir is the vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, ih@hi.is

Committee for Post-Graduate Studies

The Committee for Post-Graduate studies (CPGS) serves two faculties, Medicine and Odontology and manages doctoral studies on behalf of the faculty boards and in collaboration with the Committee for Doctoral Studies at the School of Health Sciences. The committee is responsible for organizing and administering post-graduate studies in accordance with the general rules of the University of Iceland and the rules of the two faculties. This includes study design and structure as well as receiving and answering all student matters. Applications for study, for leave from studies and assessment of previously earned study credits shall be sent to the committee as well as other matters arising regarding individual students and their studies.

Members of the committee:

Ingibjörg Harðardóttir, Chairman:

ih@hi.is

Jóna Freysdóttir, Medical life sciences:

jonaf@landspitali.is

Martin Ingi Sigurðsson, Medical life sciences:

mingi@hi.is

Margrét Helga Ögmundsdóttir, Medical life sciences:

mho@hi.is

Ragnar Bjarnason, Medical life sciences:

ragnarb@landspitali.is

Árni Árnason, Physiotherapy:

arnarna@hi.is

Helga Erlendsdóttir, Radiotherapy and biomedical science:

helgaerl@landspitali.is

Ingólfur Eldjárn, Faculty of Odontology:

eldjarn@centrum.is

Kristjana Einarsdóttir, Public Health Sciences:

ke@hi.is

Birna Þorvaldsdóttir, Student representative:

bth60@hi.is

Student services

Advise

Students can seek advice from the Chairman of the Post-graduate studies committee Ingibjörg Harðardóttir, ih@hi.is, tel. 525-4885 or the Administrator of post-graduate studies Heiðrún Hlöðversdóttir, heidrun@hi.is, tel. 525-4864, if they are experiencing problems related to their studies, communications with other students or staff or other things they would like to discuss with them.

Service

[The University Centre](#) (Háskólatorg) is located beside the Main Building of the University and is connected to Gimli, Oddi and Lögberg. Together these four buildings form a cluster in the middle of the University area that is always full of life. It is a meeting point for students and staff alike to eat together, study or take part in the many events at the Centre. Various service units for students are also located at the University Centre. [The Service Desk](#) providing personal services is located in the Centre.

[IT Support](#) University of Iceland has information or solutions regarding computer related problems, email: help@hi.is; tel: 525-4222.

[Student Counselling and Career Centre](#) provides academic and career counselling as well as [psychological counselling](#) and organizes a variety of useful courses for students on e.g. study techniques, preparation for exams, goal-setting and time management.

[The Student Psychology Clinic](#) also provides psychological services to university students and their children under the supervision of licensed psychologists.

[Professional Council on Responding to Gender-related and Sexual Harassment](#) processes cases relating to gender-related and sexual harassment and other sexual violence.

[Student Registration](#) keeps a record of students studies and assists them with various matters, especially concerning admittance and registration.

[International Office](#) oversees and manages the international affairs of the University of Iceland.

The [Writing Centre](#) (Ritver) provides advice on academic writing in Icelandic and English.

[The Language Centre](#) organises a variety of language courses to meet the needs of students.

[Icelandic Student Services](#) is a non profit organization that has the main goal to increase students quality of life by providing high quality services at a low price, adjusted to students needs

[The Statistical Consulting Centre](#) of the School of Health Sciences provides statistical consulting to academic staff and doctoral students at the School. Appointments for statistical advice can be booked and short questions can be submitted on their [facebook page](#).

Facilities for students

Supervisors assist their PhD students at the Faculty of Medicine with regard to work facilities. No specific reading rooms are allocated to PhD students in [Læknagarður](#) or [Stapi](#), other than those belonging to laboratories or study programmes. PhD students have access to reading rooms and [study and computer labs](#), run by the University IT Services. A subsidiary of the student canteen, [Háma](#), is located on the ground floor of Læknagarður where students can buy and consume food and drink. [Páll Mortensen](#) is the caretaker of

Læknagarður, tel. 525-4878, mobile 896-1365, [Þrymur Sveinsson](#) is the caretaker of Stapi, tel. 525-4366, mobile 895-9796.

Libraries

The National and University [Library](#) located in the building Þjóðarbókhlaða, Arngrímsgata 3 offers reading space for students and a study room that can be booked for group meetings. The [Health Sciences Library](#) is located at Rauðarárstígur 10, 2. floor and offers a comprehensive service for students, including assistance with literature searches, teaching the use of electronic databases and reference managing software, inter-library loans and loans of reference books for the health sciences. The website of the [Health Sciences Library](#) contains a wealth of material as well as offering web access to electronic databases and journals and e-books. Students at the School of Health Science can apply for access from their home computer by contacting through the webpage [Lerki – fjaraðgangur](#). Other useful websites include [hvar.is](#) and [leitir.is](#) that offer students access to a variety of scientific material that is available to Icelandic institutions free of charge.

Reference managing software

Students are encouraged to use reference managing software such as [Endnote](#) or [Endnote Web](#) from the beginning of their project work as this will greatly facilitate building up and organizing the background material as well as the final composition of the reference list. A guide to using Endnote Web can be found on this website: <http://endnote.com/training>. This software is available free of charge at <http://www.myendnoteweb.com/>. Another software that can be downloaded for free is [Zotero](#).

Grants

Students must consult their supervisors before applying for grants for their studies. Information on grants can be obtained from websites such as [Funds and Scholarships](#) and http://english.hi.is/international_office. It should be kept in mind that applying for funding is a time-consuming process and should be prepared in good time.

Student vaccinations

It is important that students working with infectious material are well informed about potential risks in laboratories and hospitals and that they adhere to appropriate procedures of conduct and risk prevention of the institution.

PhD study programmes and courses

PhD studies at the Faculty of Medicine are 180 ECTS. This includes training in planning and conducting research, analysis and interpretation of data, presentation and discussion of research and results obtained within the framework of the state of knowledge in the field as well as publishing papers in international peer-reviewed journals. The doctoral student is also expected to receive training in supervising others in performing research in his/her field as well as teaching, conditions permitting.

Students should familiarize themselves with the study programme that they have chosen, including special requirements, see [Course Catalogue](#) on the web. The Faculty of Medicine offers the following PhD study programmes: [Health Sciences LÆK561](#); [Medical Life Sciences](#)

[LÆK565](#); og [Medical Sciences LÆK566](#). The doctoral studies consist of a 180 ECTS research project following a master's degree or equivalent. Mandatory courses that may already have been completed at the master's level are: General Statistics, course for M.Sc. and Ph.D. students [LÆK101F](#) (6 ECTS); General research methods, course for M.Sc. and Ph.D. students [LÆK102F](#) (6 ECTS), and Research Ethics [HSP073F](#) (3 ECTS). Students participate in the annual Conference for Doctoral Students at the School of Health Sciences.

[Accrediation of prior coursework](#)

Courses attended before the start of the PhD studies can be credited provided that they were completed within the last five years or up to ten years if the student can demonstrate that he/she has maintained his/her knowledge e.g. in employment. Courses on topics where knowledge is not likely to have changed much can also be credited for up to ten years after completion. In case of doubt the Committee for Post-Graduate Studies can consult course supervisors at the Faculty of Medicine. [Applications](#) for accreditation of courses shall be signed by the supervisor and sent to the administrator for post-graduate studies. For each course, detailed information must be provided on the name of the course, ECTS, grades, course description, teachers, assessment and, for courses outside the University of Iceland, copies of certificates etc., as well as explanation of relevance for the doctoral studies.

[Courses at other universities \(Guest studies\)](#)

Students wishing to take [courses at another university](#) have to submit an application to their home Faculty or School using a [special application form](#).

[The doctoral research project](#)

Work on the doctoral research project can start as soon as the student has established his/her collaboration with a supervisor. Students can enrol without full description of the research project, using the [application](#) form without description of the research project. In this case a full description has to be submitted to the administrator of research studies within 6 months of enrolment, using the [application](#) form with description of the research project. The research proposal is worked out in a collaboration between the student and the supervisor and advisor (if applicable). It is very important that research project is well defined and demarcated from the beginning.

[Advice and guidance for students](#)

From the beginning of their studies each PhD student shall have a supervisor, who is a permanent faculty member in the discipline concerned, with whom he/she consults on issues regarding the planning of the studies, choice of courses and other relevant aspects. The student and his/her supervisor sign a [contract](#) on their collaboration and submit the signed forms to the administrator of the post-graduate studies.

[Supervisor and advisor](#)

The supervisor and student submit a plan for the research project for approval by the Committee for Post-Graduate Studies at the Faculty of Medicine. The supervisor and student sign the collaboration contract detailing rights and duties of each party. The supervisor is in

most cases also the main advisor but an external advisor can be included provided that he/she fulfils requirements as specified in the rules. In such cases the supervisor is responsible for the general conduct of the project and that this meets the requirements of the FoM, but the direct project supervision is in the hands of the advisor.

Doctoral committee

The Faculty of Medicine appoints 3-5 persons by official letter to serve on the doctoral committee for each student as soon as the research proposal has been accepted. The committee is composed of the supervisor, one or two advisors (if applicable) and two to four additional members. At least one of these shall be from outside the institution/laboratory/department where the research project is carried out. The doctoral committee reviews and advises in the research proposal and accepts the overall plan for the research project as well as courses, if appropriate. The doctoral committee monitors the progress of the studies and the research and is responsible for compliance with quality requirements. Doctoral committee's shall meet at least once a year and submit minutes on a form that can be found [here](#) to the administrator of post-graduate studies.

Change of advisor/supervisor

A change of advisor/supervisor may become necessary for a variety of reasons, e.g. if the student changes his/her project. Should such a need arise, the student discusses this first with his/her advisor/supervisor before sending a request for change to the administrator for forwarding to the CPGS.

If an advisor/supervisor leaves his/her employment or is temporarily absent on sabbatical, sick leave or for other reasons it may be necessary to call in additional assistance to supervise the student on his/her project.

Finally, there may be a breach in trust between the student and his/her advisor/supervisor, e.g. if one party feels that the other has not fulfilled their responsibilities. In such cases the student or advisor/supervisor can apply to the CPGS that the advisor/supervisor be replaced.

The role of the student

The student is responsible for his/her study and is encouraged to be independent in his/her work. The student familiarizes him/herself with the rules of the FoM and follows these. It is important for the student to follow advice and respond to comments from his/her advisor/supervisor. It is also the responsibility of the student to keep the advisor/supervisor fully informed and get approval for outside contacts, e.g. presentations of the research project or applications for funding. The student is responsible for handing in a progress report on his/her studies by December 1st and May 1st each year.

Progress and progress reports

The administrator for post-graduate studies sends a form for a progress report to the students to be filled and submitted by December 1st for the autumn term and May 1st for the spring term. The progress reports are used to monitor progress and assess credit units. The supervisor must confirm the validity of the report and supplies information on proportionate

time devoted by the supervisor and other members of the doctoral committee so that payments may be calculated. A request to record credits for the research project is then sent to Student Registration who updates the student's record for that term. The last 30 credit units are recorded after completion of the doctoral defense.

[Leave from studies](#)

A student who wishes to take a leave from his/her studies can [apply](#) to the CPGS for permission to do so by sending a written application to the administrator. If the CPGS grants the leave the student has to inform the Student Registration and pay the appropriate proportion of the registration fee.

[Interim evaluation](#)

Around halfway through the doctoral programme (no later than one year before the intended date of completion) the status of the doctoral project shall be evaluated in detail. For the interim evaluation (referred to as "interim examination" in the Regulation on doctoral study and doctoral degrees at the University of Iceland School of Health Sciences), the doctoral student shall write a short summary of the project and primary conclusions. The student shall submit this to the doctoral committee and invite committee members to a presentation of the project. On the basis of this presentation and discussions, the doctoral student's knowledge and the status of the project shall be evaluated, with regards to whether the content is sufficient for a doctoral thesis. Such an evaluation is a necessary prerequisite for the doctoral defence. Ideally, the presentation shall be open to all. The supervisor, tutor as well as members of the doctoral committee shall be in attendance. A representative from the CPGS shall oversee the evaluation and lead the discussion. This representative shall neither be the student's supervisor nor tutor.

[Writing and delivering the PhD thesis](#)

The PhD thesis shall be written according to the appropriate conventions and [guidelines](#) found on Ugla. The School of Education runs the [Writing Centre](#) (Ritver), where students can obtain advice on academic writing in Icelandic and English on a peer basis and discuss their projects. For references the [APA style](#) shall be used. Journal titles shall be abbreviated according to [international standards](#) (Index Medicus - abbreviations of journal titles). Students are also reminded to use reference managing software, e.g. *Endnote* or *Endnote Web* as emphasized earlier. The doctoral thesis shall be written in English. Students, who do not have English as their first language are advised to have the text checked by a language expert. An abstract in Icelandic shall be included. The thesis shall be carefully proofread.

Several printing offices have experience in printing the layout, such as [Háskólaprent](#), [Leturprent](#), [Pixel](#) or [Samskipti](#). Students are advised to obtain a cost estimate. The thesis shall be printed on 80/100 g/m² paper in size B5. The layout is in size A4 and this is scaled down to B5 in the final printing. The cover shall be in the colour of the School of Health Sciences in stiff cardboard and the thesis shall be stapled or glued in the spine.

[Handing in the PhD thesis for defense](#)

When the student's doctoral committee is satisfied that the project is ready for examination and has reviewed and confirmed that all requirements have been fulfilled they submit a request for a PhD defense to the CPGS along with a detailed assessment of the PhD student. At the same time they submit a [form](#), with suggestions for 4 opponents, of whom 2 will be selected and appointed if approved. It is important to include full addresses and e-mails as well as list publications and short CV for the proposed opponents. These documents should all be sent by e-mail to the administrator for post-graduate studies. The assessment must be signed by all members of the doctoral committee and be received by the CPGS at least 3 months in advance of planned thesis defense. The CPGS reviews the qualifications of proposed opponents and the [Graduate School](#) provides approval for the opponents if they meet the requirements. The CPGS appoints an evaluation committee, which normally consists of both opponents and a representative of CPGS, who usually chairs the committee. The administrator corresponds formally with the selected opponents and decides on the defense date in agreement with them, the doctoral candidate and the supervisor.

A thesis manuscript shall be sent in a PDF format by e-mail to the administrator for post-graduate-studies and four printed copies to the FoM at least 8 weeks before the potential date for the defense. This must be a final version of the text but not bound.

The doctoral candidate is responsible for printing the thesis once he/she has received and responded to comments from the evaluation committee and submits the printed thesis in 7 copies to the FoM 7 days in advance of the thesis defense. The thesis shall be accompanied by the [signed declaration for access](#). Please note that it is not recommended to block access to the thesis except for very valid reasons. Furthermore, the doctoral candidate is requested to bring one signed copy to the defense, to add to the thesis collection in the "Doctors' room", and an electronic copy of the final version of the thesis in PDF format must be submitted to [Opin vísindi](#), the university's electronic repository for doctoral theses. The doctoral candidate is responsible for obtaining the ISBN code from the [National and University Library](#). The doctoral thesis shall be presented openly at the defense. The thesis must contain the abstract in Icelandic and English on a loose sheet showing the name of the University of Iceland and the ISBN code with the full title of the thesis and name of the doctoral candidate.

The doctoral defense

The doctoral candidate concludes his/her studies by defending the thesis in an open forum. The [doctoral defense](#) is a formal and prestigious occasion for the University, the Faculty, the doctoral candidate and other responsible parties. The main objective of the doctoral dissertation is a professional academic discussion on a high level between the doctoral candidate and the opponents on the thesis. The doctoral candidate is expected to display his/her expertise on the research topic and field of knowledge as well as the ability to present his/her research. The defense is thus divided into two parts: a lecture given by the doctoral candidate and the discussion between the candidate and the opponents. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine administers the defence. The doctoral candidate starts by thanking the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Iceland for accepting his/her thesis for public defense. When the discussion is complete the Dean of the Faculty, the evaluation committee and the candidate's doctoral committee retire for a brief meeting. When they

return to the hall the Dean announces whether the defense has been deemed valid. The new Doctor then thanks the Dean for directing the proceedings, the opponents for their evaluation and discussion and may also express further thanks as appropriate. Finally, the new Doctor is expected to thank the University for the honour of conferring on him/her the doctoral degree and close by extending his/her good wishes for the future of the University.

Library books returned

Students must have returned any material borrowed from the [National and University Library](#) at least two weeks before graduation. Furthermore, every student is obliged to maintain his/her active registration at the University of Iceland and pay registration fees throughout his/her studies.

Completed PhD theses from the Faculty of Medicine

The FoM website contains abstracts of and information on PhD theses of students who have graduated from the FoM. PhD theses are kept in [Skemman](#), the electronic database of theses and the website [Opin vísindi](#). Each student decides with his/her supervisor on the type of access granted to the thesis.

Rules on PhD studies and standards and requirements at the Faculty of Medicine and School of Health Sciences

- [Rules about doctoral studies and doctoral examination at the School of Health Sciences, University of Iceland, no. 1252/2011](#)
- [Standards and requirements for the quality of doctoral programmes at the University of Iceland](#)
- [The Graduate School](#)
- [Regulation for the University of Iceland](#)