

Guide to the summarizing part of a PhD thesis

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

This document is a guide for the summarizing part (“kappen”) of a doctoral thesis in medicine and health sciences, NTNU.

The requirements for a scientific thesis are described in [NTNU's PhD regulations](#) section 11.

The degree dr. philos has separate regulations: <https://www.ntnu.no/phd/drphilos>

The summary should be written and designed according to the scientific tradition of the research field. The candidate is encouraged to look at other theses within the same field for structure, form, and chapters. The supervising team should be able to assist with this.

In “Guidelines for the Assessment of Candidates for Norwegian Doctoral Degrees”, the following is emphasized: *“In the assessment of the doctoral thesis, special consideration should be given to whether the thesis is an independent and comprehensive piece of work of high academic standard with regard to the formulation of research questions. The assessment should also consider the methodological, theoretical, and empirical bases, documentation, treatment of the literature and form of presentation in the thesis”.*

The guidelines can be found here: <https://www.ntnu.edu/phd/regulations>

Writing the summarizing part

1. The summary should consist of updated knowledge from the field of research and should review and summarize the problem areas, findings and conclusions presented in the articles, so that the thesis is presented as a whole. The thesis must be relevant and updated at the time of submission. Clarifications of concepts and elaborations should be accounted for.
2. The summary must contain a paragraph describing the scientific theories and methods on which the work is based.
3. The summarizing part of the thesis is to emphasize the coherence between the papers and may become the basis for theoretical discussions.
4. The summary must contain a discussion where complexity and nuances in the results should be discussed considering methodological and theoretical questions. When discussing methods, the choice of method(s) and strengths and weaknesses of the study design(s) should be reflected upon. The discussion should include a section where the candidates reflect upon their role in the project. Ethical aspects of the work should also be discussed.
5. The candidate must be able to reflect upon their own and other’s research within the field. The candidate’s research should be viewed in a greater perspective. In some cases, it may be relevant to include a discussion of methods in the section where choice of methods is discussed. In other cases, it may be more relevant to discuss methods in the section where the results are discussed.
6. This must be clarified in the conclusion and potential sections regarding applications and further research. The summarizing part should clearly demonstrate how the thesis contributes to the subject area.
7. The scope of the summary should be according to the traditions within the discipline. The number of pages will usually be somewhere between 50-120 pages without appendages and references.

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