

The 4+4 PhD program is split into part A and part B. During part A, which spans the first two years, the candidate is initially enrolled simultaneously as a master student as well as a PhD student. At the end of part A, the master's degree is completed and the PhD enrollment continues with part B for another two years.

#### ENROLLMENT

Enrollment can be done through a stipend aimed exclusively at the 4+4 program or through a stipend opened for both the 4+4 and 5+3 program. It is a requirement that the applicant for the 4+4 program is enrolled in a relevant master education. In addition to this, normal requirements for enrollment as a PhD student must always be met.

It is advised to commence the recruitment process in due time – earlier than when recruiting for a traditional PhD program since SU scholarship payments are paid in advance and due to the fact that an individual study plan must be approved in STADS prior to the time of enrollment.

#### COURSE OF STUDY

During the first two years (part A), the candidate is enrolled 50% as a master student and 50% as a PhD student. The candidate must follow the respective study regulation (“studieordning”) for the education in question, unless an individual study plan is approved. The candidate must follow the standard rules and regulations at the Doctoral School. A PhD plan, including the information regarding the completion of the master's degree, must be uploaded to the PhD Manager no later than two months after enrollment. This timeframe applies even though 4+4 PhD students are only enrolled part time in part A of the PhD program.

#### COURSES, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

In addition to the courses that must be completed in the master's program, the candidate must obtain an additional 30 ECTS from PhD courses. These must be courses on a PhD level and cannot be identical with courses that are a part of the master's degree. It is recommended that some of the PhD courses are taken already during part A of the program – this will free up more time for research during part B. The candidate can also teach during part A, this requires that the department in question employs the candidate as a student teacher. The PhD student must be integrated in the research environment at the department and take an active part in a research group.

#### STATUS SEMINAR AFTER 18 MONTHS

This seminar serves as a check point in order to ascertain if the PhD study is on the right track coming up to the qualifying exam held at the end of part A. The 18 months seminar follows the same procedure as the 11 months seminar held for PhD students enrolled in

the 5+3 programme (see description here: <https://www.phd.aau.dk/tech/for-current-phd-students#forms-and-templates>). The outcomes are recommendations to the PhD student for the rest of the PhD study. If the progress is clearly not satisfactory, the main supervisor can suggest to the PhD Study Director that a three-month recovery period is initiated, resulting in possible termination of the PhD enrolment if the recovery requirements are not met. Similarly, the PhD student may decide not to continue with the PhD study and unenroll from the 4+4 programme and instead focus on preparing and defending a master thesis, under the standard conditions of the respective master's program.

## QUALIFYING EXAM

At the end of part A, the master's degree must be obtained by successfully completing an oral qualifying exam. Duration of the exam is 60 minutes and during the exam the student must account for the results achieved so far, present the status of the PhD progress and outline a plan for part B of the PhD program. The exam must contain a written qualification report that contains an introductory section explaining the context, research question(s) and state-of-the-art, followed by a summary of results achieved so far together with a detailed description of the results. This can be achieved e.g. in the form of an appendix with already accepted papers, paper drafts or work in progress. The scientific level of the results, both in terms of quality and quantity, must not be lower than the expectations for a standard master thesis, however, it is acceptable to include results that are not yet fully finished.

The student should explicitly mark parts of the qualification report (typically an appendix or parts of the appendix) as a material used solely for the evaluation of the PhD study. Such material will not count for the purpose of awarding the master's degree but is expected to become a part of the submitted PhD thesis.

Parts of the qualification report written in connection with the qualification exam (typically the published scientific papers or paper drafts) can be used in the final PhD thesis. If this is the case, the coherence and application of parts of the qualification report must be explained and cited in the PhD thesis in order to fulfil the general requirements on good scientific practice.

## ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFYING EXAM

Assessment of the material is done by an external examiner according to the 7-step grading scale.

There are three possible outcomes of the qualification exam: (1) the student passes both the qualifying exam as well as the requirements for a master thesis; (2) the qualification report and its defense are sufficient for obtaining master's degree but the

PhD study is not progressing satisfactory, or (3) the qualifying exam is failed and also insufficient for obtaining a master degree.

In cases (1) and (2) the master's degree is awarded and in case (1) the student automatically continues with part B of the PhD program. In cases (2) and (3) a three-month recovery period is initiated cf. § 10 in the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme, followed by a new qualifying re-exam (case 3) or a re-establishment evaluation (case 2). The main supervisor is responsible for drawing up a recovery plan in order to get the PhD study back on track. Furthermore, the main supervisor must assess whether or not the recovery of the PhD study has been successful after the three months. Failing the qualifying re-exam or the re-establishment evaluation will result in termination of the PhD enrolment. The student can also opt for only finishing the master's degree, in which case the student follows ordinary re-examination procedures for master students.

Once the exam is successfully passed, the candidate must forward the master diploma or its transcript as soon as possible to the Doctoral School. When this is done, a two-year employment contract (part B of the PhD study) is initiated. Employment as a PhD student entails that the department in question can assign you tasks not directly related to the PhD research (maximum of 560 hours over the two years). Typically, though not exclusively, this can be done through teaching tasks.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

During part A of the program, the Finance and Account Department handles the administration of the SU stipend. The candidate must apply by using the following template: <https://www.hr.aau.dk/blanketter/legater-stipendier/#367662>

During part A the candidate receives 2 x SU scholarship per month and during part B the candidate is fully employed as a PhD student.

## STUDY ABROAD

It is recommended to plan the stay abroad during part B of the 4+4 PhD program. This is because during this part the candidate is employed as a PhD student and thereby covered by AAUs travel insurance. If it is required to take the stay already during part A, the candidate is still eligible to receive reimbursement for the documented expenses related to the travel. It is however important to be aware of the different rules for employed and non-employed PhD students.

## VACATION

During part A the candidate is not covered by the Holidays Act and is therefore not able to accrue holidays.