

---

**Gestione dottorato**

---

# **Guidelines for the Ph.D. thesis procedure**

---

## **Summary of the procedure**

### **1. Submission of the thesis**

After completing 15 ECTS in doctoral courses and receiving the approval of the Thesis Director, the doctoral student shall submit the following to the Ph.D. Programme Coordinator ([gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch](mailto:gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch)):

- 1 electronic copy (in PDF format) of the final version of the thesis, conforming to the standards set out below.
- The form “Abstract module” available at: <https://www.com.usi.ch/en/study-communication/phd-doctoral-studies/regulations-and-guidelines>

The email with the final draft of the thesis and the “Abstract module” have to be sent with the Thesis Director in Cc. If required, one or two bound copies (with simple binding) of the thesis must be provided.

The thesis defense procedure is managed by Gestione Dottorato Office:  
[gestionedottorato.com@usi.ch](mailto:gestionedottorato.com@usi.ch)

### **2. Submission of the thesis to external jury members**

The Jury Commission (made up of two external members, the Thesis Director, the eventual Thesis Co-Director, as well as a Faculty professor - generally presiding over the Commission) is proposed by the Thesis Director and appointed by the Graduate Studies Committee. Subsequently, the thesis is sent by the doctoral college office to the two external jury members in electronic form (and if requested in paper form). Jury members have generally 30 days to read the thesis and to write commentary (normally consisting of 2 or more pages) in which they highlight:

- Strengths of the thesis and potential areas for improvement;
- Contribution of the thesis to knowledge and scholarship;
- Candidate's demonstrated capacity for original and critical thought, and depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding of relevant field(s) of study;
- Candidates expertise with respect to relevant methodologies and techniques;
- The structure, written style and presentation of the thesis;
- The detailed nature of corrections required (if any).

Jury members have then to write a first assessment of the thesis:

- Accepted
- Accepted subject to changes to be done **after** the oral defense
- Accepted subject to changes to be done **before** the oral defense
- Rejected

Within the agreed date, jury members send their reviews to the Ph.D. Programme Coordinator, who sends them to the Thesis Director. Please note that it is not appropriate for the doctoral student to interact or communicate with any jury member before the oral defense.

### 3. The oral defense of the thesis

If / When the thesis is accepted by all Jury members, or if it is “Accepted subject to changes to be done after the oral defense”, the defense date is decided and the Jury Commission formally convened with email from Gestione Dottorato Office.

If the thesis is accepted subject to changes to be done before the oral defense, the doctoral student has to do modifications as required. Then, the doctoral student must send to Gestione Dottorato Office ([gestione-dottorato@usi.ch](mailto:gestione-dottorato@usi.ch)) these documents:

- A PDF of the revisited thesis with modifications in Track Change mode;
- A PDF of the revisited thesis “clean” with no track changes;
- A PDF document in which modifications done and the process followed are summarized.

Then, these documents are sent to all Jury members to ask a new assessment of the thesis in view of modifications made. Generally, Jury members have 15 days to read the revised thesis and write a new assessment.

For the oral defense, each doctoral student presents their research in about 45 minutes and defends what they did, as well as conveys limitations. Then, Jury members ask questions for a maximum of 1 hour and 15 minutes.

## Timeline of the procedure

From the day in which the thesis has been received and the names of the two external reviewers have been sent to Gestione Dottorato ([gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch](mailto:gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch)), consider this general timeline:

- 2 weeks for the decision of the Graduate Studies Committee about the Jury Commission composition, the thesis structure, and the anti-plagiarism procedure;
- 30 days to allow Jury members to read the thesis and send their comments;
- If the thesis is accepted by all Jury members (i.e.: Accepted, or Accepted subject to changes to be done after the oral defense) it is now possible to formally set the date of the thesis oral defense; not before. The date of the oral defense has to be at least 1 month after the day in which all Jury members have sent their (positive) reviews.

The USI Travel Office will then proceed with the booking of the flight/train and hotel (where necessary) for the external reviewers. Also, the room in which the thesis will be discussed, will be reserved. The choice of the room is done based on availability.

- If the thesis is not accepted (i.e.: Rejected, or Accepted subject to changes to be done before the oral defense) the doctoral student has to make modifications as required, and the thesis has to be resubmitted to all the Jury members. Once the thesis is accepted without request for changes, or request for changes to be completed after the oral defense, the day of the oral defense can be defined and has to be at least 1 month from that moment.

## **Style sheet and formatting of the thesis**

### **1. Languages Allowed**

The thesis can be written in Italian, English, French or German.

The language in which the thesis is written has to be also the language of the oral defense (rare exceptions can be made only on an extremely special request).

### **2. Structure of the thesis**

- Title page
- Commission and place of research (To be added only in the final version of the thesis, i.e. after the Jury Commission is approved by the Doctoral Graduate Studies Committee).
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Contents
- Chapters
- References
- Appendices

In case of cumulative thesis, consider requirements as indicated at article 16 of the Ph.D. program.

### **3. Printed and electronic formats**

A4 paper, text justified on the right and left, printed front and back with page numbers on the bottom right (for odd pages) bottom left (for even pages). The thesis in electronic form must be in one single file, containing all the relevant parts (text, pictures, appendices, etc.). The format must be Adobe PDF.

### **4. Formatting**

Font: Times New Roman 11,5 pt  
Line spacing: 1,5 pt  
Margins: top = 4,8cm,  
bottom = 3,6cm,  
odd pages on right = 2,8cm,  
on left = 3,7cm,  
printed on both sides.

### **5. Paper copies**

In accordance with the Thesis Director, the candidate can decide to print in hard cover some copies of the thesis to be delivered the day of the oral defense to all members of the Jury Commission.

After the (successful) oral defense, the newly awarded doctorate must deliver the final thesis to the Faculty Academic Studies Administration and to Gestione Dottorato Office.

Specifically:

- One paper copy of the thesis in hard cover. Printing and binding are at the cost of the doctoral student. This paper copy has to be delivered to the Academic Studies Administration (office 321).
- One PDF copy of the thesis to Gestione Dottorato Office: [gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch](mailto:gestione-dottorato.com@usi.ch)

In case any member of the Jury Commission has requested modifications to the thesis **after** the oral defense, or in case that at the end of the oral defense any member of the Jury Commission has requested modifications to the thesis, the doctoral student is required to make these changes prior the delivery of the final thesis to the Academic Studies Administration. Modifications are to be evaluated as satisfactory by the Thesis Director. To that end, along with the final version of the thesis, the newly doctorate has to deliver:

- The module "Final approval of the thesis", signed by the Thesis Director and by the Ph.D. Programme Coordinator. This module will be sent to the newly doctorate by Gestione Dottorato Office.

## 6. Electronic version

USI seeks to promote a programme for the dissemination of the Ph.D. thesis in electronic format, with the participation to RERO project (<http://doc.rero.ch>).

The newly awarded doctorate will receive an email by the Lugano library in which it is required to deliver these documents:

- One file in PDF of the final approved thesis;
- A TXT or RTF file with the thesis abstract and the title in different languages (with a maximum of 3, but always 1 form must be in English) and keywords.
- A PDF module to fill in.

## Ph.D. title award

The award of the Ph.D. title is bound to the delivery of the electronic and paper final version of the thesis to the Academic Studies Administration, to Gestione Dottorato and to the Lugano Library (as described above). The paper version of the thesis has to be handed in to the Academic Studies Administration of the Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society.

---

### Disclaimer

The goal of these guidelines is to help doctoral students during their PhD thesis submission and discussion. In case of divergence, the Ph.D. Regulations shall prevail.

Please read the Regulations and the Ph.D. Study Programme carefully prior to the submission of your thesis.

Both documents can be found at:

[www.com.usi.ch/en/study-communication/phd-doctoral-studies/regulations-and-guidelines](http://www.com.usi.ch/en/study-communication/phd-doctoral-studies/regulations-and-guidelines)

---