

## Defence

*The below information is for defences that take place after 30 June 2024. If your defence takes place before 30 June 2024 please refer to the Thesis Hub and Thesis Manual of academic year 2022-2023.*

Your thesis has been approved and you have requested your defence. In this manual you will learn more about what you can expect during the defence and how you can best prepare for it. For information about handing in the thesis, determining the defence date, and requesting your defence in Osiris, please refer to the thesis manual of your programme and the “Handing in the thesis and graduation” page on the Canvas Thesis Hub.

The defence takes place on campus in the office of your supervisor, or second assessor, or a meeting room. Your supervisor will inform you about the location. Online defences are possible under specific circumstances. More information about an online defence can be found at the end of this manual.

The defence will take 30 minutes. In the first 5 minutes you present the highlights of your thesis. Use no more than 3 slides. In the remaining 25 minutes, your supervisor and second assessor will ask you questions about your thesis. The session is individual, hence there will be no other students present. It is not possible to bring guests, you need to come alone. Be present at the agreed location 5 minutes before the agreed time.

If you would like to have a printed version of your thesis during the defence (which is recommended), you need to print and bring this yourself.

### The presentation

The aim of the 5-minute presentation is to explain the highlights of your thesis in a concise, clear way.

Some practical tips for a successful presentation:

- Focus on the main message of your thesis. What is your research question? How did you answer it? What are the main findings?
- Don't clutter your slides. Only present data which you will actually discuss.
- Discuss the implications of your research. What do your findings mean for society, business and academia?

You can use your own laptop to present your slides.

Don't be tempted to make your presentation longer so there is less time for questions. This strategy won't work and your supervisor might decide to cut you off halfway your presentation.

The default language for the presentation and defence is English. If, however, you are a Dutch speaking student and your supervisor and second assessor also speak Dutch, you can ask your supervisor if you can present and defend in Dutch.

### The questions

Your supervisor and second assessor will ask various questions about your thesis. To prepare for this part you can read your thesis again. There might be some weeks between your defence and the date on which you handed in the thesis, so you might have forgotten some details. While reading, try to be critical and ask yourself questions about what you have written. For example: Why have you made a certain choice? How could you have done this differently? What are the limitations? What do the different elements in your tables / graphs mean? Although it is unlikely that you will ask yourself the same questions as your supervisor and second assessor will ask you, coming up with these questions and answering them, will prepare you to think critically about your thesis and will help you to more easily and quickly come up with answers.

### Determination of the grade

After half an hour of questions, the supervisor and second assessor will ask you to leave the room for a few minutes so they can determine your final grade and deal with some administrative matters. You can relax now, the hard part is over!

### Feedback and grade

When you return you will receive your grade and feedback on your thesis and the thesis process.

### Online defence

The online defence is very similar to the on-campus defence. Your supervisor will let you know which meeting software will be used, in most cases this will be MS Teams or Zoom. Make sure that the meeting software works properly on your device and acquaint yourself with how it works, particularly how you can share your presentation. You will receive the meeting ID from your supervisor.

On the day of the defence, join the online meeting about 5 minutes before the official start time. You can test if your presentation works properly and discuss any final details regarding the meeting with your supervisor.

After your presentation and questions, the supervisor and second assessor ask you to leave the meeting for a few minutes, or they will leave themselves. The supervisor and second assessor will determine your grade and attend to some administrative matters. When they / you come back in the meeting you will receive your grade and feedback on your thesis and the thesis process.