

# FAQ End of thesis

## From the jury proposal to the diploma

### Timeline and check list for the Oral Exam and Public Defense

Please note that according to article 14 of the Directive concerning doctoral studies, **the thesis must be submitted at least 35 days before the oral exam**. Therefore, the deadline is strict and no delay will be granted.

Please read the EDOC FAQ President of the oral examination

and the EDOC FAQ President of the public defense

## Before the oral exam

### When and to whom do I have to submit my jury proposal? ▲

The jury proposal, dully completed, printed and signed should be submitted **no later than 8 weeks before the oral exam** to the doctoral program administrator.

### Where do I fill out my jury proposal and how? ▲

You can fill your jury proposal in your IS Academia student portal. Here is a guide to upload the jury proposal.

### Can I choose my jury president? ▲

The answer will depend on the doctoral program you are affiliated to. Please contact your doctoral program admin.

### How can I choose the jury members? ▲

## About the thesis jury

- Read "Ordonnance sur le doctorat délivré par l'Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne"

### Jury members (president, director, co-director, examiners)

- Hold the title of PhD.
- Must not have hierarchical relations to one another.
- Must not have a close personal or professional relationship with the candidate or thesis director (married, etc.). In particular, the jury

president and the examiners should not have taken part in the work reported in the thesis.

Jury president

- Cannot be part of the same research unit (chair or lab) as the thesis director(s).
- Is not involved in the thesis work.
- The jury president and the internal examiner are two different people.

Examiners


- Internal examiner cannot be part of the same research unit (chair or lab) as the thesis director(s).  
If, exceptionally, the president and the internal examiner are part of the same research unit (chair or lab), the internal examiner should not be the superior of the president.
- If the internal examiner is the program director, they cannot sign the jury proposal. In this case, the jury proposal must be signed by another program committee member on behalf of the program director.
- An examiner (internal or external) cannot be a previous or current, official or de-facto, (co-)director of the thesis being evaluated.
- An examiner working at the Extension School, which is considered as an EPFL unit, must serve as an internal member.

Other

- Invited professors, guests, academic guests and host professors at EPFL cannot be considered as examiners (neither internal nor external).
- Retired professors from the EPF are considered as internal examiner. They cannot act as president of the jury.
- The “Emeritus professor” from other universities are considered as external examiner.

















Internal or external examiner?

Federal Institutes of Technology	Internal examiner	External examiner
EPFL	✓	✗
Innovation Park <sup>1</sup>	✓	✓
EPFZ – ETH	✓	✓
<sup>1</sup> Depending of the HR Contract (EPFL Contract=Internal examiner; Non EPFL Contract=External examiner )		
EPFL Outposts		
Campus Biotech Geneva	✓	✗
EPFL Fribourg	✓	✗
IMT Neuchâtel / Microcity	✓	✗
EPFL Valais Wallis	✓	✗
EPF Domain’s research institutes		
PSI – Paul Scherrer Institute	✓	✓
WSL – Bellinzona / Birmensdorf / Davos / Sion	✓	✓
EMPA – Dübendorf / St. Gallen / Thun	✓	✓
EAWAG – Dübendorf / Kastanienbaum	✓	✓

<b>Other research institutes</b>		
CERN Geneva		
CSEM Neuchâtel		
IDIAP Martigny		
Max Planck Society (MPS)		

Where can I organize my oral exam?

▲

<b>Federal Institutes of Technology</b>		
EPFL		
Innovation Park		
EPFZ – ETH		
<b>EPFL Outposts</b>		
Campus Biotech Geneva		
EPFL Fribourg		
IMT Neuchâtel / Microcity		
EPFL Valais Wallis		
Alpole		
<b>EPF Domain’s research institutes</b>		
PSI – Paul Scherrer Institute		
WSL – Bellinzona / Birmensdorf / Davos / Sion		
EMPA – Dübendorf / St. Gallen / Thun		
EAWAG – Dübendorf / Kastanienbaum		
<b>Other research institutes</b>		
CERN – Geneva		
CSEM – Neuchâtel		
IDIAP – Martigny		
Max Planck Society (MPS)		

Can my lab pay my tax of CHF 1,500?

▲

The tax cannot be paid by your lab/unit. According to the [Ordinance on the EPFL doctorate](#), the doctoral candidate is required to pay the tax stipulated in the ordinance of 31 May 1995 concerning taxes in the EPF domain.

## Oral exam by videoconference

Can I do my oral exam fully online?

▲

Oral exam via videoconference is admissible for maximum two of the examiners (rapporteurs). The other jury members must attend it in person.

Should a jury member be prevented from attending the exam in person as a result of unforeseen circumstances of a serious nature, please contact the Doctoral Students’ Office by email immediately : [sac-doctorants@epfl.ch](mailto:sac-doctorants@epfl.ch)

---

## Which rooms are equipped with a videoconferencing system? ▲

Videoconferencing system and room should be discussed and validated by the PhD candidate and the jury president – please read the [FAQ President of the oral exam](#).

	<a href="#">BC 010</a>	<a href="#">Service audiovisuel SAVE</a>
EPFL Ecublens	<a href="#">CE 1257</a>	<a href="mailto:save.visio@epfl.ch">save.visio@epfl.ch</a>
	<a href="#">SV1717</a>	33082 ou 33098 contact <a href="mailto:helpdesk.sv@epfl.ch">helpdesk.sv@epfl.ch</a>
	<a href="#">ME D2 1124</a>	SAVE provides technical assistance before and during the oral exam
SV Faculty	<a href="#">SV 3715</a>	For SV faculty members only contact <a href="mailto:helpdesk.sv@epfl.ch">helpdesk.sv@epfl.ch</a>
Campus Biotech Geneva	<a href="#">H4 3 133.084</a>	
	<a href="#">H8 1 166.158</a>	Booking → your lab admin
	<a href="#">H8 1 144.167</a>	
EPFL Fribourg	<a href="#">HBL 0 37-38A</a>	Contact person → Ms. Véronica Cubarle
IMT Neuchâtel / Microcity	<a href="#">MC B0 302</a>	<a href="#">Booking → Ms. Lysiane Bourquin</a>
Wallis-Valais (Sion)	<a href="#">Zeuzier (I17 4 K2)</a>	Booking → your lab admin

---

## The thesis

---

### When and where do I have to submit my provisional thesis? ▲

Please note that according to article 14 of the Directive concerning doctoral studies, the thesis must be submitted **at least 35 days before the oral exam through your IS-Academia student portal**. Therefore, the **deadline is strict and no delay will be granted**.

---

### What should I include in my provisional thesis? ▲

The provisional thesis, which has to be submitted in IS-Academia (**PDF size: max. 100 MB**), should include

- abstract followed by keywords; written in one of the four national languages (max. 3,499 characters including spaces)
- abstract followed by keywords; written in English (max. 3,499 characters including spaces)
- thesis body
- bibliography (only one for all the chapters of the thesis)
- curriculum vitae of the doctoral student

---

### Any tips about the thesis? ▲

## Before you begin

Keep in mind that your thesis will be produced in close collaboration with your thesis director. It is important to take time to discuss your ideas with your thesis director about the content and layout of this document.

Finally, take a few minutes to review [instructions provided by the Repro](#), which will bring important information for the printing of your thesis.

## Cover page

The official cover page of your final thesis will be generated automatically by the Doctoral Student's Office from the data in IS-Academia and will be added in your thesis by the Repro. It includes

- thesis title
- jury members
- laboratory
- doctoral program

For the provisional thesis, you can use the template you will find in the next section (Any thesis templates available) or make one on your own.

## Content order

Most of thesis content (cover page, contents page, list of figures etc.) is listed below. You should ensure that you have included all required elements, and that you discuss the whole with your thesis director.

## Content and bookmarks

In an effort to optimize your PDF file\*, it must have bookmarks to each main section, in the following order:

- 1 Cover page
- 2 Acknowledgements
- 3 Preface by another author (often the thesis director)
- 4 Summary (Abstract max. 3,499 characters)
- 5 Table of contents
- 6 List of figures, tables and symbols
- 7 Body of the thesis
- 8 Appendices
- 9 Bibliography
- 10 Glossary
- 11 Index
- 12 Photographic credits (list of photos used with the names of the copyright holders)
- 13 Curriculum Vitae

Please, verify that each bookmark links its location properly.

\*PDF size: max. 100 MB

## When you are ready to publish

Information on publication of your thesis and advice on submission, copyright, and on-demand publishers can be found on the EPFL library webpages: [Services for researchers](#) and [Citation & copyright basic rules](#).

An unofficial template for the PhD thesis at EPFL is provided by PolyDoc. You can use it should you wish. There is no official or mandatory template to be used. Just remember to comply with the requirements of the Print center (Repro).

---

## What about plagiarism check (iThenticate)?

### Information on plagiarism for PhD students

You and your thesis directors are both provided with access to iThenticate, which is a tool that highlights any sentences and paragraphs in your documents (scientific reports, thesis) that are also found in other online documents.

In the future, all submitted thesis will automatically be verified with this tool. It will be your responsibility to explain the outcome of this verification to your thesis Director and the President of your thesis jury.

All doctoral candidates are encouraged to take some time to make themselves familiar with the iThenticate tool, and learn how to interpret its results. Given the importance of this issue, you should be cognizant of the tool and try it out on your thesis before it is submitted.

In order to make you aware of the different aspects of plagiarism, and to support you in learning how to reference correctly in your documents, an informative website – Similarity Check – has been put in place. Please check out this informative website, and don't hesitate to contact the EPFL Library in case you have any remaining questions on plagiarism or iThenticate, and the EPFL Doctoral School if you have questions concerning the verification of your thesis against plagiarism.

---

## What about a thesis made of published articles?

It is very common to reuse content in a thesis. It is therefore important to ensure that the use (or reuse) is possible and to ask for authorizations from the rights holders when necessary.

This guide provides all the information : [Publish your thesis while respecting copyright rules](#)

A thesis containing a compilation of articles published (or submitted for publication) in scientific journals is possible on condition that it contains:

- an introduction that puts the whole thesis into context and gives a summary of the objectives of the research to be presented in the thesis (a thesis must have a common thread that connects the different papers/chapters together).
- a general conclusion chapter, summarizing the main contributions of the thesis
- a section presenting possibilities for future development of the work presented in the thesis

Each section that was, or is to be, published as an article must comprise on its first page

- a complete list of authors

- a detailed description of the doctoral candidate's contribution
- a full bibliographic reference available

CDoct 109 (November 2015) and CDoct 110 (January 2016) ([Regulation](#))

## Permission to reproduce

For a thesis made of articles, the good practice consists in contacting the publisher to ask permission to reproduce the article in the thesis. The publisher should not refuse and it keeps the student safe from any further problem with the publisher who is in the majority of cases the copyright holder.

Likewise, where an article is signed by two or more authors, an authorization to publish should be obtained from their respective authors.

## Good to know

- There is no minimum number or maximum number of articles
- It is not required to be the first author
- Scientific journal or literary magazine, the rules are the same

## Theses made of published articles (Note from the EPFL Library)

More and more frequently, theses are partly or completely built as assemblies of articles already published in scientific journals (profit-making or non-profit-making). Most of the time, publishers forbid the distribution of articles in their final format.

In order to avoid problems that would hinder its mission as the official distributor of EPFL theses, the Library asks the authors who want to include published articles in their thesis to comply with the following guideline:

- The thesis must not include, even as an appendix, articles with the publisher's layout unless the author has obtained an explicit permission to do so and that it is mentioned at the beginning of the thesis chapter.

Instead of the publisher version of the article, we recommend to always use:

- The preprint, i.e. the version of the manuscript submitted to the journal before peer-reviewing.
- The postprint, i.e. the version accepted for publication. It includes additional corrections, suggested by the reviewers (as accepted by the publisher). The content is the same as the publisher version except for the final layout.

Whatever the version you choose (preprint or postprint), a mention like « postprint version of the article published in... » or « preprint version of the article submitted to... » must be added and include a link to the published article using the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) that eases the work for the reader.



The use of the preprint and postprint versions ensures that the copyright is respected and guarantees the free distribution of EPFL theses.

Lausanne, March 2017/EPFL Library/[publishsupport@epfl.ch](mailto:publishsupport@epfl.ch)

---

## Thesis assessment

---

### What about my thesis assessment? ▲

Please read the [EDOC FAQ President of the oral examination](#).

---

## Final thesis and publication

---

### Can I postpone the printing of my thesis? ▲

Neither the author, nor the director(s) have the right to postpone the printing of the doctoral thesis

## Good to know

An electronic version will be published on the intranet few days after the public defense. It may be placed under a three-month embargo (available via the IS-Academia Portal).

---

### What about the final version of my thesis? ▲

You, as the doctoral student, must

- upload the final version of your thesis in the “Thesis” tab of the “ISA portal” taking into account (where applicable) corrections required by the thesis jury during the oral exam.
- complete the thesis’ metadata and specify information concerning its distribution (internet, intranet etc.).
- order the hard copies of your thesis at the Reprography (the EPFL’s printing centre) while specifying the details with regard to the printing.

As soon as these documents and information have been accepted by the thesis director, via your IS-Academia Portal the thesis is released for printing.

Copies of the thesis can be ordered for your or for your thesis director/lab



- in IS-Academia when you submit your final thesis (related fields to be filled in)

These printing costs are the responsibility of the person who places the order. The lab account number will have to be provided should copies be ordered for the lab.

---

## What about copyright?

### Copyright

You will find [here](#) a guide to publish your thesis while respecting copyright rules in English and in French.

- The **writer of the thesis** is considered as its author as defined by the law on copyright. The author holds all the rights conferred by copyright.
- ~~The~~ **EPFL** has a non-exclusive right to publish and use part or all of the thesis, where it has supported the author by funding their work or making available the logistical means on its premises

---

## Do I have to order copies of my thesis for EPFL archives?

No, you don't. EPFL, through the Print center (Repro), takes care and takes at its expense the printing of 3 copies whose recipients are:

- The EPFL library (2 copies – 1 for the cantonal legal deposit, 1 for its regular collection)
- The ETH library

as well as the electronic legal deposit:

- The EPFL Library (Infoscience repository, intranet or Internet access)
- The Swiss National Library in Bern (intranet access)

---

## What if my thesis involves a patent?

The distribution of a thesis can be delayed while the patent process is being completed. As soon as the patent application has been submitted, the thesis must be distributed (Loi sur le brevet d'invention, art. 49)

- [What is a patent?](#)
- To know more about patenting, please contact the Technology transfer office ([TTO](#))

---

## What about referencing and confidentiality?

### Referencing and confidentiality

- Title, abstract and keywords will be published about 15 days before the public defense.
- In case of patent application or confidentiality, these items must not include information deemed sensitive. If necessary, please contact the Library ([theses.bib@epfl.ch](mailto:theses.bib@epfl.ch))

---

### Can I choose the format and color of my thesis? ▲

You cannot choose format and color. Since January 1st 2019, the cover of all EPFL theses is red and the format is the same for all EPFL theses.

---

### When and where can I order copies of my thesis? ▲

Copies of the thesis can be ordered for you and/or for your thesis director/unit

- in IS-Academia
- when you submit your final thesis (related fields to be filled in)

Printing costs are the responsibility of the person who places the order. An account number will have to be provided should copies be ordered for the lab (ask your unit admin).

---

### How can I order a reprint of my thesis? ▲

Please contact Ms. Christinaz at EPFL Repro – Print Center:

[carinne.christinaz@epfl.ch](mailto:carinne.christinaz@epfl.ch)

---

### Where should I archive the data and code that support my thesis? ▲

#### Recommendation

You are recommended (1, 2 and 3) to:

- archive the Research Data necessary to make your thesis reproducible
- whenever legally possible, provide the jury president and members with access to the archived datasets.

#### What

**Research Data** includes code and is defined as evidence that underpins the answer to the research question, and can be used to validate findings regardless of its form (e.g. print, digital, or physical).

**Datasets** can be composed by research data necessary to validate the findings of your thesis, such as:

- raw data
- pre-processed data
- processed data
- plots
- source code
- executables documentation (e.g., README files, protocols, parameter files, log files, etc.).

#### How

Research Data should be saved in a digital archive that allows for its **long-term preservation** and retrieval. To ensure that the datasets will remain usable in the future, **data curation** prior to archiving is recommended:

- cleaning the datasets
- documenting
- enriching metadata
- converting proprietary formats into open formats
- restructuring the dataset and naming etc.

Where

EPFL offers a **free archiving service** for Research Data: [ACOUA](#), the ACademic OUtput Archive. For support and information, contact the [Research Data team of EPFL Library](#).

How long

Archived datasets can be safely stored and retrieved for many years. A basic recommendation is to make datasets preserved for at least 10 years. Depending on the research funder (SNSF, ERC, etc.) there might be specific duration requirements.

If your datasets include personal data or health data (e.g. clinical trials), both the archiving and the associated retention duration can be legal requirements. For more information in such cases, contact the [EPFL Human Research Ethics Committee \(HREC\)](#).

When

Usually, the adoption of Research Data Management good practices during the thesis makes it easy to perform data curation. Ideally, it is suggested that your datasets have been curated and **already archived at the time you upload the draft of the thesis**.

---

The public defense

---

When can I organize my public defense? ▲

Public defense can be held at the earliest 4 weeks and at the latest 6 months after your oral exam passed without reserve.

The Doctoral Students’ Office must be informed of the details (confirmed date, exact start time and room booked) **at least 2 weeks before your public defense** through Service Now.

---

How can I book a room at EPFL Ecublens campus? ▲

[Online form](#)

---

Where can I organize my public defense? ▲

Federal Institutes of Technology	
EPFL	✓
Innovation Park	✓
EPFZ – ETH	✓

<b>EPFL Outposts</b>	
Campus Biotech Geneva	✓
EPFL Fribourg	✓
IMT Neuchâtel / Microcity	✓
EPFL Valais Wallis	✓
Alpole	✓
<b>EPF Domain's research institutes</b>	
PSI – Paul Scherrer Institute	✓
WSL – Bellinzona / Birmensdorf / Davos / Sion	✓
EMPA – Dübendorf / St. Gallen / Thun	✓
EAWAG – Dübendorf / Kastanienbaum	✓
<b>Other research institutes</b>	
CERN – Geneva	✓
CSEM – Neuchâtel	✓
IDIAP – Martigny	✓
Max Planck Society (MPS)	✓
CHUV	✓

**Does my thesis director have to attend my public defense?**
▲

Yes, your thesis director must attend your public defense as they must preside over it.

## Graduation and after

**How do I get my diploma?**
▲

Your diploma is usually ready about a week before your public defense. The Doctoral Students’ Office is allowed to give it to you provided that you have

- informed the Doctoral Students’ Office of your public defense details
- submitted your final thesis (PDF) in IS-Academia and it has been formally accepted by your advisor
- signed the good-for-printing of your final thesis at the Print Center (Repro)

We will inform you by email when your diploma is ready. You must come collect it at the Doctoral Students’ Office (BP Building / only by appointment). Should you wish to know whether your diploma is ready before coming or make an appointment to collect it, please send an email to [sac-doctorants@epfl.ch](mailto:sac-doctorants@epfl.ch)

**Which date will be on my diploma. The date of my oral exam or my public defense?**
▲

The date which will be on your diploma, and your official thesis, is the date of your **public defense**, for the EPFL PhD degree and title are officially awarded at the end of your public defense.

---

### **I would like to join EPFL Alumni. What should I do?**



Membership is reserved for graduates of EPFL (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD, MoT and IML Postgraduates).

EPFL Alumni receives the list of all EPFL graduates on a regular basis. You will be contacted a few weeks after graduation (public defense).

More information on the [EPFL Alumni webpage](#) and [EPFL Alumni FAQ](#)

