

FAQ President of the oral examination – also useful for doctoral candidates

Before the oral exam ▲

- Read (at least) the thesis abstract/summary
- Read the reports received from the jury and check that everything is fine
- If some reports are negative, with reserve, or suggest that the thesis might be refused, it is advised to inform the program director before the presentation takes place. The oral exam must take place anyway
- Prepare a summary based on the jury comments
- If additional remarks are made during the exam, they will be added to the summary
- Oral exam via videoconference is admissible for **maximum two of the examiners**. Should another examiner be prevented from attending the exam as a result of unforeseen circumstances of a serious nature, competent authority may on this particular occasion authorize the videoconference for more examiners. Should the situation arise, the candidate must contact the Doctoral Students' Office shortly.
- **The Jury President is responsible for the management of the videoconference.** They should organize with the doctoral candidate to receive and share the link (zoom or other) to the online examiners. The online examiners can be found on the second page of the record of the oral exam (« ☒ visioconférence » will be written under the address of the examiner). It is recommended that the Jury President initiates the videoconference (e.g., have the “host” role on Zoom) to be allowed to mute/unmute participants if necessary.
- **The configuration of the videoconference must be tested before the exam.**
- **Good to know about videoconference:** as long as the Jury President and the doctoral candidate agree on the chosen option, any videoconference system (Zoom, Skype, Jabber guest, etc.) can be used; however, please always try to offer the best possible option, which remains the videoconference room. **Oral exam via teleconference is not accepted**

Introduction

- Greetings
- Introduce yourself, the jury and the candidate
- Thank the examiners and the thesis director(s) for their presence and their work

Explain the process

- Inform the jury of the procedure (duration is not prescribed, but lasts on average around 2 hours, presentation lasts between 30 to 45 minutes at most)
- Invite the candidate to present their work
- Questions, first round:
 - External examiners
 - Internal examiner
 - Thesis director(s)
 - President, should they want to ask questions
- Questions, second round:
 - Make sure that the discussion focuses on the evaluation of the candidate's performance and thesis work (interrupt general debate not directly linked to the candidate's evaluation)
 - Make sure that each jury member has the opportunity to form their opinion
 - The detailed comments regarding the draft thesis can be communicated to the candidate afterwards. There is no need to review them during the exam
 - If there are no further questions, the candidate is asked to leave the room

Deliberation

- Ask each jury member to give their opinion of the candidate's performance
- Explain to them the three possible decisions:
 - 1 **Accepted without reserve:** the thesis is accepted, but the jury can request minor corrections. The thesis director is in charge of checking that the jury's comments have been taken into consideration in the final version. The candidate must submit the corrected thesis only to the thesis director within a month.
 - 2 **Accepted with reserve:** the jury expresses specific concerns and requests a significant additional work that has an impact on the content or the form of the thesis which can be done within a period that may last more than one month and up to six months (duration must not exceed 6 months).

The president fills out the third page of the official record ("Details of the Jury's required corrections") and signs it together with the thesis director, co-advisor if applicable, and the doctoral program director. In addition, a detailed list containing all the requested changes may be provided to the candidate, and attached to the official record. The second evaluation will be based only on the updated version of the

manuscript. There is no 2nd exam. The jury president, supported by the examiners and thesis director(s), verifies that the required corrections are implemented.

- 1 **Rejected, first failure:** if the work is considered unsatisfactory and if bringing it to an acceptable level would request a workload of more than six months, or if the candidate has not demonstrated that they have mastered the subject, then the jury decides for a failure. The candidate is allowed to repeat the oral exam, rework their thesis or present a new one within the specified deadlines set by the vice president for academic affairs based on the proposal made by the jury
- It is expected that the jury comes to an unanimous decision. If the jury cannot come to an agreement, the president takes the final decision. The president concludes the debates and notifies the final decision
- If the thesis is proposed for a prize, please see the section farther below.
- When all the decisions have been made, write the official record

PhD Awards

If the thesis is proposed for a prize, the decision must be unanimous and added to the official record. The proposal usually comes from the thesis director. You can find more information about PhD awards [here](#)

The official record

- Assessment of the work, based on the reports of the jury: text to be prepared before the exam and to be updated during the discussions. Read the text to the jury for approval and/or modifications.
- Assessment of the oral exam: text to be prepared during the exam. Read the text to the jury for approval and/or modifications. If a prize is proposed, please tick the corresponding box(s) and indicate the name(s) of the prize(s) if needed in the part “The jury proposes...”.
- Make sure that the official record is signed by all the jury members, before they leave the room. The president must sign it as well.
- The official record must be finalized at that point and cannot be modified afterwards.
- Official record and original jury members’ reports must be forwarded to the doctoral program’s administrative assistant within 5 days of the exam. Reports are confidential and are sent only to the president of the jury. They may be given to the other members of the jury only at the time of the examination; they must however be returned to the president of the jury at the conclusion of the examination, in order to guarantee their confidentiality.

Communication of the outcome to the candidate

=> The candidate **must be informed** about the jury decision at that point

- Invite the candidate to come back in the room
- Inform the candidate of

- the jury's decision by means of a summary of the essential comments
- the consequences/implications of the decision, in terms of deadlines and work to be done (see page 2)
- Thesis title: if any change, please correct the title on the official record. Please remind the candidate that the Doctoral Students' Office must be informed.
- Thank everybody for their involvement

Communication of the corrections to the candidate ▲

The president makes sure the corrections list will be provided immediately after the oral exam to the candidate.

Oral exam with reserve ▲

See additional information in the deliberation section.

Definition of “with reserve”

Major improvement of the manuscript is needed which should be completed within a timeframe of more than one month up to a maximum of six months. No second oral presentation nor exam are required. Note that an article awaiting publication cannot be a reason to postpone the deadline for submission of the final version of the thesis (max 1 month for a thesis without reserve) nor to consider the thesis to be passed with reserve.

1. Mention the reserve in the official record

Result -> bottom of page 1, Tick the box to accept the thesis with reserve.

Signatures -> all jury members must sign on page 1

2. Complete page 3 named Thesis with reserve

Summary of the corrections required by the jury part

Corrections list should **not** mention or contain:

- name(s) of jury member(s)
- copy-paste of all or parts of the jury members reports
- unclear instructions or opinions
- list of minor corrections (typos, spelling errors, missing references – should be given to the candidate directly after the oral exam)

Time allowed part

Mention number of months, more than one to maximum six.

Note that the start date runs from when the candidate receives the letter from the Vice-President for Education. This is normally soon after VPE receives the official record.

Mandatory signatures on page 3

- President of the oral exam (if thesis director -> deputy)
- Thesis Director(s)
- Doctoral program director

3. Send the official record to the doctoral program admin

Official record duly completed and all examiners reports should be sent **at the latest 10 days after the oral exam**.

Doctoral Regulations

[Directive concerning doctoral studies](#)

[Doctoral School Internal Regulations](#)

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