

Doctoral School of Information and Communications Engineering

The following summarizes the process for the evaluation and defense of PhD theses at the Doctoral School of Information and Communications Engineering at TU Graz.

1. At least two expert referees evaluate the written thesis, one is you and one is the PhD supervisor.
2. ***Two months before the aspired official submission*** of the thesis, a complete draft version must be provided to the referees by the PhD candidate. Thereby, referees can provide recommendations for corrections or improvements. In parallel, a date for the PhD defense will be negotiated. The final PhD thesis document has to be submitted to the Dean's office at least ***four weeks before the PhD defense***. After the official submission, no more corrections or revisions are possible. Based on the official submission, each referee has to prepare and submit an independent and signed thesis evaluation report to the Dean's office (astrid.pessler@tugraz.at) no later than ***two weeks before the defense***.
3. The thesis evaluation report should cite both strengths and weaknesses of the written thesis, including the assessment of original scientific contributions and presentation quality. The typical length for such reports is 1-2 pages and it must conclude with an overall grade ranging from "very good (1)", "good (2)", "satisfactory (3)", "acceptable (4)" to "fail (5)". All grades have to be integer numbers. Please note that this report is provided to all members of the examination committee before the defense.

Based on the evaluation reports, a consent on the grade has to be found. In case the referees suggested different grades, the head of the committee will jointly discuss the grade with all referees to find a consent, otherwise majority voting will be applied.

The PhD candidate will be notified about just the agreed grade *before the defense*. Only *after the defense*, the PhD candidate can request a copy of the complete reports. Thus, please keep in mind that the PhD candidate does not yet know specific criticism, open questions, etc. from the reports during the defense.

4. The PhD defense is a public event for which an invitation is sent out by the Dean's office. The four-step process is as follows:
 1. A 30 minutes presentation by the candidate about the PhD thesis.
 2. 45-60 minutes questions by the examination committee, related to the thesis and the related scientific subject. It is the decision of the chair of the committee to accept questions from the audience.
 3. The committee retreats to jointly decide upon the grade for the defense. In the end, there will be a total of three integer grades ranging from 1-5: (1st) for the written thesis, (2nd) for the defense, and (3rd) for compulsory courses passed by the student during his PhD studies. A *PhD with distinction* is awarded if the average of the three grades is less or equal to 1.5.
 4. The PhD defense closes with the official announcement of the grades to the candidate and the public, i.e., to the audience of the event.

We hope that this document simplifies your work and thank you for your support in assessing our PhD candidates.

The Head of the Doctoral School of Information and Communications Engineering