



Politecnico
di Torino

ScuDo

Scuola di Dottorato ~ Doctoral School

WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

Operational procedures for the Ph.D title

(based on the articles 29, 30, 31 of the Ordinance on Doctoral Studies at Politecnico di Torino issued with the R.D. n°899 of 21st October 2021)

UPDATE OF 1st DECEMBER, 2021
UPDATE FROM 34° CYCLE

Ministerial Decree 45/2013, art. 8, c. 6

The title of Doctor of Philosophy, abbreviated with the words: "Dott.Ric." or "Ph.D.", is released as a result of the positive evaluation of a research thesis which contributes to the advancement of knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of study.

The Ph.D thesis, accompanied by an abstract in Italian or English, can be written in Italian or English or in any other language, if authorized by relevant Academic Board. The Ph.D candidate shall attach a report to the thesis, providing a description of the activities carried out during the Ph.D program. The thesis shall be evaluated by at least two internationally renowned professors, even from abroad, hereinafter referred to as the evaluators, who shall be external to any of the institutions involved in the Ph.D title awarding. The evaluators shall analyze and assess the thesis and propose the admission of the Ph.D candidate to the public discussion or postpone it for a maximum period of six months, if relevant integrations or corrections to the thesis were required. After this period, the candidate shall be admitted to the public discussion of the thesis, to which a new written assessment made by the same evaluators shall be attached, based on any correction and integration occurred. The public discussion shall take place in presence of an Examination Board whose composition shall be defined in pursuance of the provisions set out in the relevant regulations. At the end of the discussion, the thesis shall be approved or rejected, on the basis of a written report drafted by the Board.

If particularly relevant scientific results were achieved, the Examination Board is entitled to award by a unanimous vote a degree cum laude to the candidate.

1. Admission to the evaluation

Politecnico di Torino has developed a dedicated web tool for the evaluation procedure of the Ph.D thesis available for the PhD candidate, the Supervisor, the Coordinator, the Referees and the Examination Board.

Within the end of the third year of the Ph.D Cycle, the Academic Board shall evaluate the training and research activities of each candidate and decide the admission to the procedure in order to achieve the Ph.D Degree. The end of the third year for the candidates who had periods of suspension is postponed.

The Ph.D candidate is admitted to the procedure of achievement of the Ph.D Degree only if s/he obtains a positive evaluation of his/her research activities and the minimum requirements for training



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activities and for publications, required by the Ph.D School Board, as mentioned in the Summary about the accounting system of 28 July 2017. In case of exceptional and motivated situations in which the candidate does not hold the requirements concerning the publications or the research activity but s/he can achieve them within a short time, the Academic Board can postpone the Ph.D candidate evaluation to a future date.

The postponements can be multiple, but the Academic Board has to decide whether to admit the candidate or not, considering that the final version of the thesis and the documents mentioned below at 3.2 shall be uploaded on the web tool within 6 months after the end of the third year.

The admission to the Degree achievement procedure consists in: the Academic Board registers the admission, the Coordinator (or his delegate) enables the candidate to enroll in the Final Exam through the On Line Secretary, available from the personal page of the Teaching Portal. The Ph.D candidate must apply for the Final Exam using the on line procedure, within ten days of admission from the Academic Board.

Doctoral School reserves the right to carry out a verification on the obtainment of the requirements before of the exam date and, in the case they are not satisfactory, it can initiate the procedure for the decay of the candidate.

In the period between the conclusion of the cycle and the Final Exam, including the postponement period mentioned below at point 3.2, the candidate will still have the status of Ph.D candidate, having access to the facilities in order to complete his research activity, but he will not receive the scholarship anymore.

The Academic Board can decide to exclude the candidate from the achievement of the Ph.D Degree if: the candidate's research activities are insufficient for writing a Ph.D thesis which would promote the research in the specific scientific field and if the minimum requirements cannot be achieved before the deadline.

2. Starting the evaluation procedure through web tool

In order to be admitted by the Admission Board, candidates shall upload in their application a report concerning the activities conducted during the triennium and the possible publications; the application supports this operation by generating a report of the conducted activities that can be modified.

After the admission to the procedure, candidates shall upload also their doctorate thesis and an abstract of the same written either in Italian or in English of a maximum of 2 pages.

Such upload shall be done by and no over 6 months from the end of the third year.

The PhD candidate shall upload on the web tool a report providing a description of the activities carried out during the whole Ph.D and his/her publications list. After being admitted to the procedure, the candidate shall upload the thesis together with an abstract in Italian or English of



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maximum 2 pages. This loading has to be done within 6 months after the end of the three-years period. The summary of the activities carried out during the three-years Ph.D program will be automatically generated by the system.

The candidate's material uploaded in PDF/A version has to be validated by the supervisor who takes care of the anti-plagiarism check with the software Turnitin; the material will be available for the referees only after the supervisor's validation. During the material evaluation, no revisions can be done.

The Ph.D thesis has to comply with the theses layout guidelines of the Doctoral School.

For each Ph.D candidate, the access to the web tool shall be reserved for the referees and for the Examination Board, only; the Supervisor and the Coordinator can access the web tool in order to supervise the whole process.

The Supervisor shall cooperate with the candidate to the success of the evaluation procedure and s/he has the responsibility to monitor the progress of the process.

3. Assessment of the thesis

3.1 Selection of the referees

The Ph.D thesis shall be evaluated by two University professors external to Politecnico, hereinafter referred to as referees. They must be recognized at International level in the thesis research topic, possibly belonging to foreign institutions, external to the Academic Board and to partner bodies and/or associates and/or financing entities. The tenured researchers of public Italian and foreign Institutions, not connected with the Ph.D Course, could act as referees if they are qualified experts in the thesis field. The referees shall not share authorship of publications with the Ph.D candidate in the last three years.

By the end of the third year, the supervisor shall upload a list of perspective referees (a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 referees¹) and present it to the Academic Board that shall examine the admission to the evaluation. The Academic Board approves the referees at the same time of the candidate admission.

Please note that only candidates with a shortlist of 4 approved names can compete for the Quality Awards.

Nothing prevents that the same referee is uploaded on multiple lists. No compensation is provided for Ph.D thesis assessment.

The candidate, once enabled to the on line procedure, shall insert the approved referees list in the specific section of the web tool. The candidate and the supervisor are responsible to comply with the conditions mentioned above regarding the referees and the correct implementation of the list approved by the Academic Board on the web tool.

¹ Only the Phd candidates who have a list of at least four names approved can compete for the Quality Award.



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The web tool randomly selects the names of two referees. In case of any replacement of the referees, the web tool will indicate the sequence.

The supervisor shall contact the two identified referees and ask them to assess the thesis. We suggest the supervisor to contact the referees by an informal contact to facilitate referees participation. For this purpose, the on line procedure will contact the referees only after 5 days from the automatic generation of the list.

After 5 days of the referees insertion, the official invitation to assess the thesis is automatically sent to the identified referees. They will be explained the modalities to enter the web tool, and the reference materials for the Final Exam will be made available to them.

The referees have to accept explicitly the task within one week, engaging to assess the thesis within one month after they have received it through the web tool. In addition, the referees have to agree with a Non-Disclosure Agreement that shall protect any confidential information relating to the thesis.

If one of the referees does not accept the task, or does not assess the thesis within the timeframe indicated (one month with one week of delay), s/he will be substituted by the next referee of the list generated by the web tool.

3.2 The Assessment Procedure

The thesis, accompanied by the abstract and the report, uploaded by the candidate and validated by the Supervisor, becomes visible to the referee when s/he accepts to participate to the evaluation process.

Within 30 days of the receipt of the materials, each referee has to give an analytical opinion of the thesis through the web tool, proposing the admission to the public discussion, if necessary with minor revisions, or proposing a new assessment if relevant integrations or corrections were required.

In case of a new assessment, even if only one referee asked it, the candidate has a maximum period of 6 months (starting from the assessment communication) for revisions and for uploading the new version of the thesis to be evaluated again. After the candidate has uploaded the new version of the thesis and has obtained the validation of his supervisor with the anti-plagiarism check, the on line procedure starts again in the same way. After the second assessment, in any case, the thesis is forwarded for the Final Exam, accompanied by a new written judgment of the referees.

In case of minor revisions, the candidate has to revise the thesis and the other documents uploaded on the web tool and they have to be validated again by the supervisor, including the anti-plagiarism check.

If one of the referees does not deliver the assessment of the thesis within 30 days, despite repeated reminders, s/he will have one week to send his/her feedback; if s/he had not answered, then s/he is declared revoked and s/he will be substituted by the next referee of the list generated by the web



tool. This replacement will be notified by email.

4. Ph.D final defense and title achievement

4.1 Examination Board for the final exams

The Rector shall appoint with an appropriate decree the Evaluation Board proposed by the Coordinator and appointed by the Academic Board and responsible for the Ph.D title achievement final evaluation.

Each Committee is made of five members with the right to vote, including the two referees that have expressed their evaluation of the thesis. To be member of a committee does not exclude the possibility to be part of other committees and/or to be evaluator of other theses.

At least three members have to be external to Politecnico and belong to Italian or foreign Universities or public research Bodies, that are neither part of the Ph.D Program nor of the Ph.D Academic Board which the candidate belongs.

At least three members have to be indicated among professors and university tenured researchers, or among researchers belonging to Italian and foreign public research bodies. The Committee members external to the university field and to the above mentioned public research bodies must possess the Ph.D title.

The Committee President has to be an internal member with the right to vote.

The candidate tutor is an aggregate member, without the right to vote.

The members of the Evaluation Board cannot be in relationship of kinship or affinity up to the fourth degree included, among themselves or with the candidate.

The Doctoral School shall formally verify the requirements and, if respected, proceed with drafting the Rectoral Decree appointment.

In the event a member of the Board with the right to vote resigns, the Rector, having heard the program Coordinator, shall appoint a new member that holds the same requirements of the withdrawing member; the interested Ph.D candidates will be informed about the new Examination Board composition.

The Coordinator can propose to add to the committee, without the right to vote, other eventual members, belonging to university structures or public and private research structures, as well as foreign ones. The expenses coverage related to those aggregate members, do not belong to the University Administration.

In case of European or international collaboration projects or Ph.D joint programs, the Commission is made according to the procedures provided in the agreements themselves, that in any case have to be coherent with the University partners Regulations.



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The Commission identifies a President and a secretary, among its members with voting rights.

The Examination Board members will be able to access the thesis, along with a summary, a report, and the evaluators assessments through the on line application.

All the external Board members are asked to fill a confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement to protect the reserved information that might be contained in the thesis.

The Board appointment must be undertaken, at last, during the period granted for the revision. The work should be finalized within 90 days since the evaluators final advice acquisition. Usually, after that deadline, the Commission, that has not finalized its work, expires and the Rector appoints a new Board, excluding the expired members.

4.2 Final exams procedure

The Examination Board shall schedule the final exam calendar and communicate it, inserting the data on the online application, to the candidate and to the competent offices with reasonable advance. The tutor and the internal member are responsible for defining the dates and the inherent logistics. In scheduling the dates, the commission has to make sure the exam will be concluded within 90 days from the evaluators assessments receipt.

For members with the right to vote belonging to the Board and coming from outside Turin a mission expenses reimbursement is provided, according to the Politecnico di Torino Regulation. The reimbursement request shall be sent to the Doctoral School.

The possibility that Commission members, take part to the final defense through the videoconference is envisaged, upon verification of all the participants ID and provided that the remote members can follow the discussion and intervene in real-time, as well as examine all the documents used.

The final defense to achieve the Ph.D title consists of a public presentation usually of 40 minutes, followed by a discussion sustained by the candidate physically present in front of an examination Board, in which the candidate will debate his/her research. At the end of the discussion, the thesis, with justified written collective evaluation approved by the majority of the 5 voting members, shall be approved or rejected. In the event of a negative evaluation, the status of Ph.D candidate shall expire and the exam cannot be repeated.

The Board, with unanimous vote, is entitled to award a degree "cum laude" in case of exceptional scientific results, or in case they represent, in the Board experience, the best 10% of the examined thesis.

The Ph.D title is granted once the final exam is passed and is released by the Politecnico di Torino Rector, upon submission, by the Ph.D candidate, of an electronic copy of the final thesis in the University open repository, according to the following art. 5. In case of Ph.D programs organized in curricula, the title released shall explicitly refer to the belonging curriculum.

National or international inter-university cooperation agreements may provide for specific procedures related to the Ph.D title achievement, and a greater number of Commissioners than expected.



In case of unjustified absence to the final exam, the Ph.D candidate shall lose the right to take the final examination. The absence is considered justified only in case of serious issues followed by appropriate documentation. In those cases the Ph.D candidate has to submit to the Rector, within 30 days after the final defense scheduled date, a request to take the exam in another day, accompanied by appropriate documentation stating the absence reason and the impediment to take the exam. The Rector, considering the particular circumstances that have precluded the Ph.D thesis discussion to the candidate, shall decide on the thesis discussion admission, with justified decree, as soon as the impediment no longer applies, in a date scheduled by the Board.

5. Legal deposit

Except for any other administrative requirement, the Ph.D title achievement certification is subject to the submission of the final thesis, electronic version, in the University open repository by the Ph.D candidate, according to the rules and deadlines defined by the competent bodies.

Doctoral theses are published with free access, protected under a CC BY-NC-ND Creative Commons license. The IRIS open archive allows to request a limited period of embargo on the archived thesis, if the author is required to comply with a secrecy bond.

The University shall proceed with the mandatory transmission to the National Libraries of Rome and Florence and to the new Ph.D thesis ministerial database.

Upon request of the candidate and the tutor, conditionally to the approval of the Academic Board, part of the thesis, concerning the display of data covered by industrial confidentiality, can be made unavailable, in pursuance of provisions provided on this matter.

In case of Ph.D thesis publication, the work must bear the following wordings: "*Thesis discussed for the Ph.D title achievement in ..., carried out in the Politecnico di Torino Ph.D program ...*".

6. Final regulations

These operational procedures have been approved in the Doctorate Board meetings of 29th April, 27th May, 21st July, 15th September 2016, 17th July 2017, 19th April 2018, and 19th July 2021.

For all matters not foreseen in these Regulations, we refer to:

- Ministerial Decree No. 45 of 8th February 2013 "*Regulation on matters of accreditation from competent institutions of locations and Ph.D programs and criteria for the establishment of Ph.D courses*"
- "*Politecnico di Torino Doctoral Research Programs Regulation*", issued by R.D 899 of 21st October 2013
- "*Instructions about plagiarism and auto-plagiarism*"