TOWARDS THE
DOCTORAL DEGREE
THE PRE-EXAMINATION PROCESS

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FROM SUBMISSION TO DEFENCE
A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Only you can know the "Why".
But, we can help you with the "How" and "When".
By this stage, you must *already have*:

1. **Your Doctoral Training Plan:**
   - approved by your supervisor and follow-up group at the first follow-up group meeting (**920017J: 0 credits**);
   - accepted by the Doctoral Training Committee (**920012J: 3 credits**);

2. **Presented your Research Plan Seminar** (faculty-specific Oodi code, **1 credit**)

3. **Had your last meeting with your Follow-up group** (**920007J: 1 credit**)

*If these activities and credits have not been recorded in Oodi, you will not be allowed to submit the thesis for pre-examination.*
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER STUDY REQUIREMENTS?
You will also have:

• **A completed thesis manuscript** approved by your Principal Supervisor, and which you believe satisfies the fundamental requirement for a doctoral thesis:

  The doctoral thesis should show evidence that you can independently and critically apply scientific research methods and generate new scientific knowledge.

• **A firm proposal for the nomination of the pre-examiners** of the doctoral thesis, proposed by your Principal Supervisor and approved by your Follow-up Group and by you.
WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE SUBMISSION

If your written language skills are not good, it is very strongly recommended to have the language of the thesis checked before submission.

Discuss also with your supervisor about submitting the thesis for checking in the Urkund system (http://www.oulu.fi/urkundsystem/)
SCHEDULING
"TIC – TOC", THE CLOCK IS TICKING

Doctoral training committee
Pre-examiners
Opponent(s)
Supervisor
Publisher
....
You

Milestones and deadlines
TIME-LINE
HOW LONG DOES THE JOURNEY LAST?

A + B
Submission for pre-examination

2 months

Evaluations by pre-examiners complete

C
Permission to defend the thesis

7-10 days

Thesis revised according to pre-examiners’ comments

1 day

Urkund (last chance)

Printing of the thesis

4 weeks

Public display of the thesis

10 days

Defense of the thesis

1-14 days

Graduation

4-30 days

Approval & grading of the thesis
Total duration of the end-process - from submission to grading (months)

2015

HBS
Median = 5.2 months
Range: 2.4 – 24.0 months

1/3 of theses from the HBS, over ½ from the TNS, and ¾ from the HS, and, take longer than 6 months to get through the end-process*.

Longer processing periods correlate with:
• Longer pre-examination times (> 3 months);
• Longer times between the granting of the permission to defend the thesis and the dissertation (> 2 months).

TNS
Median = 6.0 months
Range: 0.7 – 30.0 months

HS
Median = 6.5 months
Range: 3.6 – 20.5 months

N = 65

N = 33

N = 74

Very similar observations were made in 2014.

* Note that the status of the Studies is irrelevant to this data.
The duration of the end-process is dependant upon the faculty responsible for the handling of the thesis.

LuTK & OMS (N = 30)
Median = 4.6 months
Range: 0.7 – 12.2 months

ArkTK & HuTK (N = 13)
Median = 6.5 months
Range: 4.2 – 12.9 months

LTK & BMTK (N = 63)
Median = 5.2 months
Range: 2.4 – 24.0 months

KTK (N = 9)
Median = 6.2 months
Range: 5.3 – 8.0 months

TSTK & TTK (N = 49)
Median = 6.0 months
Range: 3.0 – 30.0 months

OyKKK (N = 8)
Median = 8.7 months
Range: 5.5 – 20.5 months
At least **two pre-examiners** and at least **one opponent** shall be appointed for each doctoral thesis.

*If there is only one opponent*, he/she may not also be a pre-examiner.

*If there are two opponents*, one of them may also be a pre-examiner.

**Well-justified exceptions** may be made to these requirements upon special permission granted by the Dean of the graduate school.

**Education regulations (2016)**

16 § Assessment of study attainments

In international double and joint degrees, the assigned tasks for examiners and opponents can **deviate** from this, as stated in the degree contract.
YOUR PRE-EXAMINERS AND OPPONENT
WHO CAN THEY (NOT) BE?

They must be

- holders of a doctoral degree, or professors;
- from outside the University of Oulu.

Note: docents of the University of Oulu may be appointed as pre-examiners, or opponents, if they work full-time outside of the University of Oulu.

They cannot be

- supervisors of the thesis;
- co-authors of any articles included in the thesis, or in other publications with the candidate within the last five years;
- close collaborators of the supervisor(s). Close collaboration refers to e.g. joint-publication during the last four years;
- emeritus/emerita professors from the University of Oulu.

The stipulations of section 28 of the Administrative Procedure Act (6th June, 2003/343) apply as to the legal incompetence due to likelihood of bias of examiners and opponents of doctoral theses, licentiate theses and corresponding study attainments.
## YOUR PRE-EXAMINERS AND OPPONENT

### A FEW ESSENTIAL TIPS

#### Pre-examiners

- Make sure they are expert, or at least very **knowledgeable**, in the area of your research;
- Inform them of the **type** and **content** of the thesis;
- Make sure they know **what is expected** of them;
- The version of the thesis (**content and presentation**) that you submit to the pre-examiners must be **“perfect”**... in your opinion;
- If you have a tight schedule, your supervisor could ask them to complete their review of the thesis "**a little faster**" (official limit is **2 months**);
- Use the **template** provided by your chosen publisher to write the thesis.

#### Opponent(s)

- Be flexible with your **schedule**... within reason;
- Inform the opponent of the general **"protocol"** of the defence;
- Give the opponent sufficient time to read the thesis and **prepare** for the dissertation;
- **Familiarize yourself** with his/her research.
CHECK-POINT
ARE YOU READY?

✓ Thesis manuscript approved by PS
✓ (Permission from the original publishers to re-publish your articles in your thesis) – can be done later
✓ Pre-examiners approved by PS and FuG
✓ Thesis manuscript in "perfect form"
✓ Opponent chosen and contacted (not required at this stage, but highly recommended)

A moment of Academic History
Zeno’s Thesis’ Paradox

Around 465 BC, a young Zeno of Elea formulated this paradox in response to interactions with his advisor, Parmenides:

“If for every n number of errors you correct on your thesis, your Professor discovers n/2 number of new errors, the number of revisions reaches infinity.”

You correct n errors
Your advisor discovers n/2 new errors
You correct n/4 errors...
Your Advisor discovers n/8 errors...
You will never graduate.

Back then, they used real blood as ink.
Important: The permission to submit the thesis for pre-examination is granted by the Chair of the DTC and does not require a scheduled DTC meeting.

- Download, read and follow the guidelines for the *Final Stages of the Doctoral Degree Process*;
- Discuss with your Chief Academic Officer about the end-process;
- Download and fill in parts A and B of the *Application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis* – with your Principal Supervisor;

If you see a "Submit form" button, do NOT push it !!!
• Print parts A and B and collect the necessary signatures from:
  • Yourself (Part A) and other signatures required in section A4 (e.g. permissions from co-authors using shared articles in their theses)
  • Your Principal Supervisor and the chair of your Follow-up group (Part B)
• Deliver 3 complete copies of the thesis and one original copy of parts A and B (filled in and signed) to the Chief Academic Officer.

If you see a ”Submit form” button, do NOT push it !!!
• The Chief Academic Officer takes care of the rest of the submission process (unless agreed otherwise) and informs you of the completion of each step;
  • **If not done already**, get permission from the publishers to re-publish your articles in the thesis;
  • **Start preparing** for the dissertation.
• The pre-examiners’ statements should arrive **within two months**.
  • **Respond** to all comments of the pre-examiners (correct the thesis if and as requested… ).
  • **Final language checking-proof-reading/fine-tuning (if not already done)** can start now (if the pre-examination went OK)
Important: The permission to defend the thesis is granted by the DTC and requires a DTC meeting.

Check scheduling and submission deadlines of DTC meetings.

- Download and fill in part C of the Application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis (= permission to defend and nomination of the opponent(s) and custos) – with your Principal Supervisor;
- Print part C and get your Principal Supervisor to sign it;
- Deliver part C (filled in and signed) to the Chief Academic Officer.

If you see a "Submit form" (Lähetä lomake) button, do NOT push it !!!
THE GOAL IS IN REACH

- DTC gives permission to defend the thesis (DTC **meeting is required**);
- The Chief Academic Officer sends the thesis and instructions to the opponent;
- You take care of all issues related to the publishing of the thesis;
  - Deliver the thesis to the publisher and **agree on the delivery date**;
  - Note: a printed copy of the thesis must be publicly displayed for 10 days before the thesis defense;
- Inform the opponent(s), and **fix "the day"**;
- Get ready for the defense and the karonkka !!!!!!
TOWARDS THE DOCTORAL DEGREE

Spreading the information concerning the public defense
TOWARDS THE DOCTORAL DEGREE