

## THE FINAL STAGES OF THE DOCTORAL DEGREE PROCESS

Instructions and guidelines for the final academic year, the review of the doctoral thesis and the granting of the doctoral degree

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## Purpose and structure of these instructions

The purpose of this document is to provide instructions and guidelines for completing the final stages of postgraduate researcher training leading up to, and including the award of the doctoral degree. It starts approximately one year before graduation with the doctoral candidate's third (*final*) meeting with the follow-up group. The actual "end-process" starts when the doctoral thesis manuscript is ready to be submitted to the reviewers for pre-examination. From this point, it will usually take between four and six months until the doctoral degree is awarded, although with careful planning, this time can be significantly shorter (Table 1).

Chapter 1 of this document describes the main stages of the review process, the administrative steps and the key regulations that supplement the *Education Regulations of the University of Oulu* (KJ), which – in turn – are based on the *Universities Act*, the *Government Decree on University Degrees*, and the *Regulations of the University of Oulu*.

Chapters 2 and 3 include instructions and guidelines for the publication of the doctoral thesis and other necessary communications related to the doctoral thesis defence.

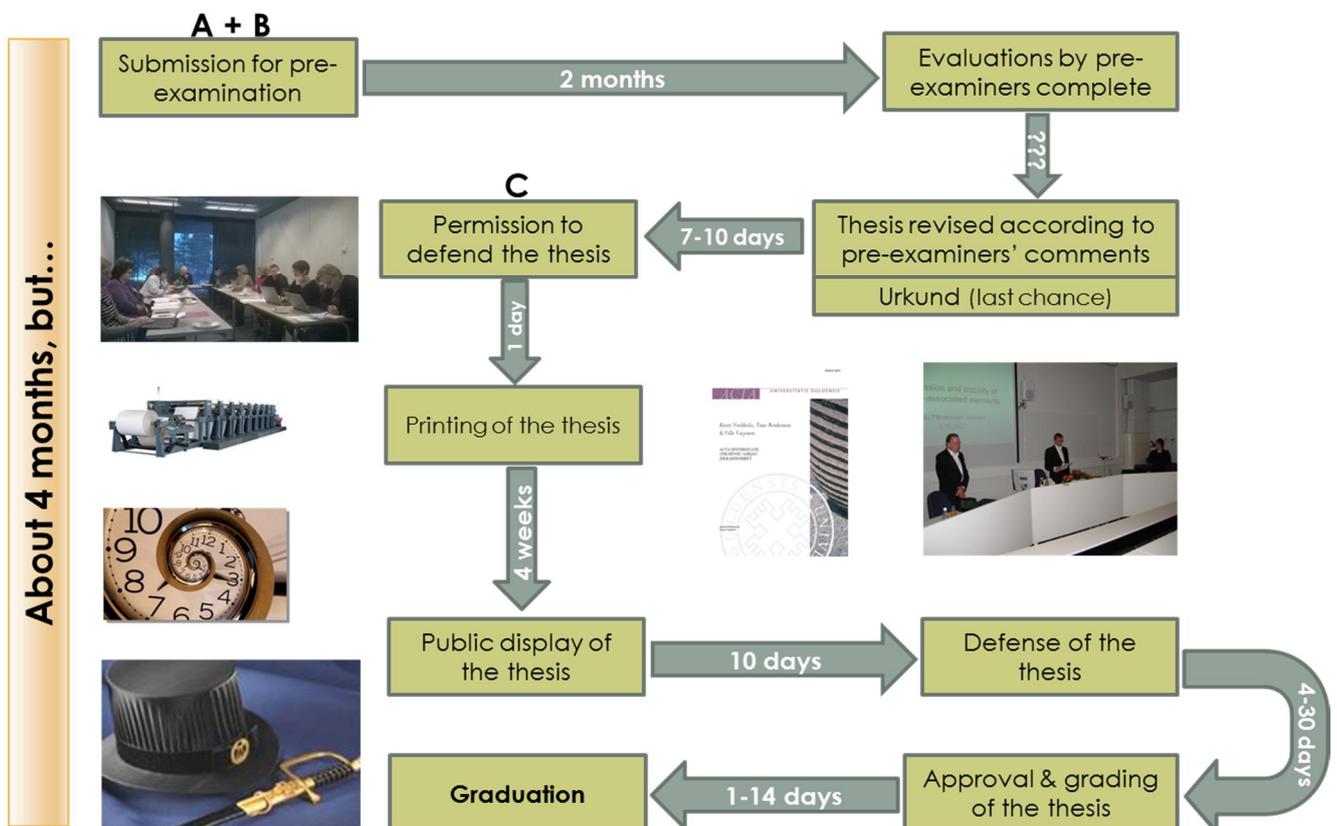
Chapter 4 describes the formalities of the public defence of the doctoral thesis, and the regulations regarding its implementation.

Chapter 5 documents the academic traditions related to the public defence of the doctoral thesis at the University of Oulu. Many of the instructions given in this chapter are not binding, but rather describe the established practices, and good manners, of our university community.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe how the doctoral thesis is graded and the doctoral degree is granted.

**Important:** Exceptions to these regulations and guidelines may arise in cases where the doctoral candidate is undertaking a Joint, or Double Doctoral Degree with another University. Such exceptions are detailed, on a case-by-case basis, in the formal *Joint/Double Doctoral Degree Co-supervision Agreement* established with the partner institution(s).

Figure 1. Summary of the final stages of the doctoral journey and their duration.



## 1 Processes during the final stages of doctorate studies

### 1.1 Completing the doctoral thesis manuscript

The doctoral thesis must demonstrate that the doctoral candidate is able to independently and critically apply the methods of scientific research and create new scientific knowledge.

The writing and finalisation of the doctoral thesis usually takes place during the last year of training, starting with the third (*final*) follow-up group meeting; this meeting should therefore be arranged approximately twelve months prior to the planned doctoral thesis defence. It can usually be determined at that time whether the doctoral thesis manuscript can be finished within the next six months or so. Before the meeting with the follow-up group, the doctoral candidate must check that their completed courses and other relevant training activities are recorded in Oodi; if necessary, this can be done with the help of the Faculty study service point secretary, or a coordinator. The completed courses must be compared with the previously accepted Personal Study Plan (PSP) recorded in Oodi. At this point, minor changes can still be made to the PSP, if they are approved by the supervisors and the follow-up group. As a general rule, the studies included in the PSP must be completed and registered in WebOodi before the doctoral thesis is sent for review.

Based on discussions with the student, the supervisor makes a preliminary proposal regarding the potential reviewers and opponent(s), which is presented and discussed at the final meeting with the follow-up group, after which the proposal may be revised, if necessary. As three doctoral thesis experts are required, it is recommended that the list include a few more names (usually a minimum of five) in case some of the people proposed are unable to accept the honour.

The doctoral candidate finalizes the doctoral thesis manuscript by making the revisions agreed upon with the supervisors; this may require several reading and revision rounds. The student edits the doctoral thesis so that its layout and format conform to the requirements of the selected publication series (e.g. Acta Universitatis, instructions on the publication series), and sends copies of the thesis to the supervisors, the chairperson of the follow-up group, and the doctoral degree programme director. When these parties have given their approval to start the review process, the doctoral thesis may be submitted for pre-examination according to the procedure described below.

The candidate should also remember to apply for any re-publication permits that may be required for published articles that are to be included in the doctoral thesis.

### 1.2 Permission to defend a doctoral thesis

The candidate and the principal supervisor submit an application for permission to submit the thesis for pre-examination by filling out parts A and B of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis. The forms are available on the [Forms and instructions website](#) of the Graduate School at <http://www.oulu.fi/uniogs/formslibrary>.

Part C, which relates to the nomination of the Opponent and the actual permission to defend the thesis, will be submitted later, when the pre-examination has been completed.

The submission of the doctoral thesis manuscript for pre-examination and the formal nomination of the reviewers do not require a decision at a meeting of the Doctoral Training Committee.

The chairperson of the Doctoral Training Committee appoints the reviewers (KJ §16), and grants the permission to submit the thesis for pre-examination, based on the information provided by the candidate in parts A and B of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis and their presentation by the Chief Academic Officer of the Faculty.

#### 1.2.1 Qualifications of reviewers and opponents

At least two *reviewers* and at least one *opponent* must be appointed for the examination of the doctoral thesis. The reviewers and the opponent participating in the examination of the doctoral thesis are often jointly referred to as the *doctoral thesis experts*, or simply *experts*. These should usually include three different people, although well-justified exceptions may be made upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Permission for exemption must be applied for by submitting a free-form written application with the parts A, B and C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis. In the case of double and joint degrees, the assigned

tasks of the experts may deviate from this model, as defined in the double/joint degree agreement established between the partner Universities (KJ §16).

In all cases, the doctoral thesis experts must meet the following criteria:

- All must have a doctorate, or hold a professorship. At least one of the opponents and at least one of the reviewers must be at least at the academic level of a *docent*. One of the reviewers may also have obtained practical expertise similar to that of a person with a doctorate or be a person with a doctorate and a couple of years of research experience since their doctoral thesis defence who is working at the second stage of the academic research system (such as a postdoctoral researcher).
- All must be from outside of the University of Oulu.
- The doctoral thesis experts may not be co-authors of any of the publications included in the doctoral thesis, or have published anything together with the doctoral candidate during the past six years.
- The doctoral thesis experts may not be supervisors of the doctoral thesis, or current or former members of the candidate's follow-up group.
- A person who is engaged in close cooperation with the supervisors should not be a doctoral thesis expert. Here, the term "close cooperation" refers to several joint publications (relative to the supervisor's overall publication frequency) during the past four years, or an extensive project-natured cooperation (such as in the same centre of excellence). Any cooperation must be notified when submitting the proposals for the appointment of the reviewers (part A & B) and opponent (part C).
- A person who has defended their doctoral thesis at the University of Oulu may be a doctoral thesis expert if they meet the other qualifications listed above and have worked as an independent scholar, or as a professional scholar outside the University of Oulu for a minimum of five years after the defence of their doctoral thesis.
- A docent<sup>1</sup> of the University of Oulu may be appointed as a doctoral thesis expert if he/she meets the other qualifications listed above and occupies a post on a fulltime basis outside the University of Oulu.
- Regardless of whether an emeritus/emerita agreement has been made, an emeritus/emerita professor of the University of Oulu may not be a doctoral thesis expert.

The chairperson of the Graduate School's Doctoral Training Committee will assess and decide upon the above-mentioned criteria. The chairperson may submit any important issues for resolution by the Doctoral Training Committee.

### 1.2.2 Application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, part A – the applicant and the thesis manuscript

The doctoral candidate must fill out the information about the applicant and the thesis manuscript in part A of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis:

- Applicant's personal information
- Registration information
- Name of the doctoral thesis
- Supervisor(s) of the doctoral thesis
- Information about the doctoral research
- Appendices:
  - Final report of the follow-up committee.
  - In the case of a compilation thesis, a report, approved and signed by the principal supervisor, on the candidate's own contribution to publications with several co-authors. Where applicable, the report must describe, for each publication (or manuscript), the candidate's input relating to the selection of the subject matter, the research questions, the research design and methods, data collection, analyses, the interpretation of the results, and the writing of the article itself.
  - Written consent from the primary author of the publication (if not the doctoral candidate) to the use of the publication in a compilation thesis.
  - Any justified objections or dissenting opinions related to the nomination of the proposed experts.

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<sup>1</sup> A researcher is considered to be at the academic level of a docent if he/she is a senior lecturer at a university, or has obtained a position at the third stage of the academic career system via an external expert assessment. Typically, such researchers are professors/associate professors/postdoctoral researchers/research fellows.

### 1.2.3 Application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, part B – review of the thesis manuscript

The principal supervisor discusses the proposed reviewers with the student, the other supervisors and, if necessary, with the chairperson of the follow-up group (if any changes have been made to the list of experts specified in the follow-up group's meeting). Furthermore, the principal supervisor will inform the doctoral degree programme director about the completion of the manuscript and the proposed reviewers, and will take any comments by said person into account. The principal supervisor will contact the proposed reviewers before submitting the final proposal to determine whether they are willing to take the job. In order to make sure that the reviewers have enough time to get ready for their task and, thus, to ensure that the review process does not cause undue delay to the student's graduation, preliminary discussions with the proposed reviewers should be conducted one to three months prior to the estimated completion date of the doctoral thesis manuscript.

A template for the invitation of the reviewers is enclosed as Appendix 1 to these instructions.

The principal supervisor will make the proposal for the nomination of the reviewers by submitting part B of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, which includes:

- A statement by the principal supervisor on the readiness of the doctoral thesis and proposing the reviewers;
- The principal supervisor's assurance that the doctoral thesis manuscript meets all of the requirements set by the University of Oulu and that all of the supervisors are in favour of the proposed reviewers.
- A statement by the chairperson of the follow-up group that the thesis work fulfils the requirements set by the University of Oulu and can be submitted for pre-examination, and recommending the approval of the proposed reviewers.
- Appendices:
  - Mandatory attachments to the form include brief CVs of the reviewers (max. 3 pages) highlighting the previous and current positions and affiliations, and a full list of publications published during the past five years ;
  - If necessary, information concerning any agreements of joint supervision and the respective roles of the supervisors must also be enclosed.

The completed parts A and B of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, together with their required appendices, must be submitted to the faculty's [Chief Academic Officer](#) (see <http://www oulu.fi/yliopisto/node/34743>).

The doctoral candidate must also submit, in electronic format, the final thesis manuscript and, in the case of compilation theses, the publications, possible manuscripts of unpublished articles, and summaries to be included in the thesis, to the Chief Academic Officer.

The Chief Academic Officer presents the full application to the chairperson of the Doctoral Training Committee, who makes the final decision with respect to granting the permission to submit the doctoral thesis to the appointed reviewers for pre-examination.

## 1.3 Review of the doctoral thesis manuscript

The Chief Academic Officer will inform the candidate, the supervisors, the doctoral degree programme director and the responsible coordinator of the Graduate School, of the decision regarding the permission to submit the thesis for pre-examination to the appointed reviewers, and will archive the original application for permission to defend the doctoral thesis.

The Chief Academic Officer will also send the decision to the appointed reviewers, together with the thesis, its appendices, and the instructions on how to conduct the review and submit their evaluation.

The reviewers are expected to submit their written, justified statements within two (2) months of having received the thesis manuscript. The statements will include a recommendation to grant, or deny, permission to defend the thesis.

The available alternatives for the reviewer's recommendations are:

- Proposing that the permission to defend the thesis be granted;
- Proposing that the permission to defend the thesis be granted, provided that fairly minor, revisions to the manuscript are made (without requiring a new review).
- Proposing major revisions to the doctoral thesis manuscript (and a new review).
- Proposing that the permission to defend the thesis be denied.

In addition to a written statement, the reviewers fill out an evaluation form that includes an assessment of the merits and shortcomings of the doctoral thesis. They are also required to propose a grade for the thesis.

The reviewers send their statements to the Chief Academic Officer who will forward them to the candidate, the supervisors and the doctoral degree programme director.

The candidate will have the opportunity to submit a response, or objection, to the reviewers' statements. The candidate will also have the opportunity to apply for a discontinuation of the examination process.

## 1.4 Revision of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral candidate revises the doctoral thesis manuscript based on the reviewers' statements:

- The doctoral candidate agrees with the principal supervisor on the revisions to be made and the deadline by which they must be completed.
- The doctoral candidate makes the revisions and submits a detailed written report on the revisions made.
- The principal supervisor checks the revisions, endorses them by signing the candidate's written report on the revisions, and submits it to the Chief Academic Officer.
- If a new review is required by the reviewers, the Chief Academic Officer sends the corrected manuscript and the candidate's report to the reviewers.
- If a new review is not required, the Chief Academic Officer instructs the principal supervisor and the candidate to proceed with the submission of Part C of the application for permission to defend the doctoral thesis.

## 1.5 The granting of permission to defend the doctoral thesis and the appointment of the opponent and custos

### 1.5.1 Overview

The principal supervisor submits Part C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, which includes the actual request for permission to defend the doctoral thesis and a proposal for the nomination of the opponent and the Custos: the latter oversees the public defence of the doctoral thesis.

The Doctoral Training Committee makes a decision on the permission to defend the doctoral thesis based on the statements submitted by the reviewers, and appoints the opponent(s) based on the proposal of the principal supervisor.

However, if the proposal for the nomination of the opponent is delayed for some unforeseen reason, at the time of the submission of part C of the application for permission to defend the doctoral thesis, the granting of the permission can still proceed. The appointment of the opponent and Custos, may then be carried out later (using the same form) by decision of the chair of the Doctoral Training Committee (KJ §16): it does not require a meeting and decision of the Doctoral Training Committee.

### 1.5.2 Preparation

The person proposed by the principal supervisor to be the opponent should be included in the list of experts approved at the third (*final*) meeting of the candidate with the follow-up group, or the issue must be further discussed with the chairperson of the follow-up group before submission of part C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis.

The principal supervisor also informs the doctoral degree programme director of the proposal.

In order to avoid unnecessary delay to the candidate's graduation, the principal supervisor should invite the opponent to undertake the task before, or immediately after, the doctoral thesis has been submitted to the reviewers for pre-examination. In every case, this should be done before submitting the proposal to the Doctoral Training Committee.

A preliminary agreement on the date for the defence of the doctoral thesis should be made when inviting the opponent, taking into account the unpredictable extent of the revisions that may be required by the reviewers.

The Custos is responsible for coordinating the agreement on the final date to be set for the public defence of the thesis.

A template for the invitation of the opponent is enclosed as Appendix 2 to these instructions.

### 1.5.2 Application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis, Part C - the defence of the thesis

Part C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis includes proposals by the principal supervisor for:

- the nomination of the opponent(s), and
- the nomination of the Custos.

The chairperson of the Doctoral Training Committee usually nominates one (or two) opponent(s) and one Custos at the same time as the permission to defend the doctoral thesis is granted by the Doctoral Training Committee. The nomination of the opponent(s) and Custos does not require a decision by the Doctoral Training Committee (KJ §16).

In order to be appointed as an opponent, the nominee must meet the criteria defined above (see Section 1.2.1) for the *doctoral thesis experts*.

The following issues should also be taken into account:

- If there are two opponents, one of them may also have been one of the reviewers who carried out the pre-examination of the thesis.
- A person who was appointed as a reviewer of the doctoral thesis may only be appointed as the sole opponent following a special exemption by the Dean of the Graduate School. The exemption must be applied for in writing, providing a justified reason for doing so. Such reasons might include, for example, a small global size of the branch of science, or the language employed in the thesis. The written application must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer together with part C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis.
- Taking into account the proposal of the principal supervisor, the chairperson of the Doctoral Training Committee will appoint the supervisor of the thesis, the degree supervisor, or one of the faculty's professors, to be the Custos of the public defence of the doctoral thesis.
- The Custos is the official chairperson of, and oversees, the thesis defence. The Custos makes the necessary decisions related to the details of the event after having heard the interested parties (see Chapters 4 and 5). The Custos need not have an employment relationship with the University of Oulu, but must be somehow connected to it (e.g. as a docent of the University of Oulu).
- The doctoral candidate has the right to submit a written objection, or dissenting opinion, regarding the proposal for the nomination of the opponent and/or the Custos (the objection/dissenting opinion is to be included amongst the documents submitted with part C of the application for permission to defend a doctoral thesis).

The Chief Academic Officer notifies the doctoral candidate, the principal supervisor and the doctoral degree programme director of the decision of the Doctoral Training Committee concerning the permission to defend the doctoral thesis and the appointment of the opponent and of the Custos.

The Chief Academic Officer also sends the decision to the appointed opponent(s) and Custos, together with a full copy of the doctoral thesis, and the information and instructions concerning the public defence, the evaluation criteria, and the submission of the final statement.

The candidate sends the doctoral thesis to the opponent.

## 2 Publication of the doctoral thesis

The printing and publication of the doctoral thesis may be started once the Doctoral Training Committee has granted the permission to defend the doctoral thesis. Proofreading and an Urkund anti-plagiarism inspection must be carried out before the printing and publication of the thesis.

In practice, the proofreading and Urkund inspection, as well as any other preparatory measures needed for the publication of the thesis, may often be done before the permission to defend the doctoral thesis is granted, i.e. after having received favourable statements from the reviewers; the actual publication cannot take place until after the permission to defend the doctoral thesis has been granted. For more information on publishing and printing a doctoral thesis, please contact [Publications Services of the University of Oulu](http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/9045) (<http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/9045>) and [Communication Services of the University of Oulu](http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/9045). (<http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/9045>).

Most doctoral theses from the University of Oulu are published in the [Acta Universitatis Ouluensis series](http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/8537), (<http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/8537>), but the thesis may also be published in another series of the University of Oulu, an academic series of a publisher, or as a single book that is not part of any series. The student ensures that the doctoral thesis complies with the layout instructions of the selected publication series and the publication instructions have been taken into account.

The printed doctoral thesis must be on public display for ten days prior to the doctoral thesis defence.

## 2.1 Proofreading

A linguistic review of the doctoral thesis must be made by submitting the thesis to a proofreader (this also applies to theses in Finnish). In most cases, the proofreading is done before submitting the thesis for pre-examination by the reviewers, particularly if the language of the thesis is not the student's native language. A large number of typing or grammatical errors could influence the grade proposed by the experts. The changes to the manuscript made after the pre-examination may be proofread separately before submitting the thesis to the publisher.

## 2.2 Urkund inspection

The Graduate School recommends submitting the doctoral thesis manuscript for a plagiarism detection inspection in Urkund. The Urkund inspection may be omitted, but only upon approval by the principal supervisor of the doctoral thesis. In such cases, the supervisors and the doctoral candidate must verify with extra care that the manuscript meets the authenticity requirements. Urkund is a plagiarism detection system that compares texts to identify literary theft. Furthermore, it protects your work from future plagiarism. In the case of compilation theses, only the Introduction of the doctoral thesis is to be uploaded into the Urkund system.

The principal supervisor of the thesis must be selected from the list of teachers as the recipient of the Urkund report. If the principal supervisor is not an employee of the University of Oulu, another supervisor or a degree supervisor must be selected as the recipient, who will then forward the Urkund analysis to the principal supervisor by email, or directly via Urkund.

A link to Urkund instructions for students: <http://www.oulu.fi/urkund/opiskelija>

A link to Urkund instructions for supervisors: <http://www.oulu.fi/urkund/opettaja>

The Urkund helpdesk will answer any technical questions by e-mail: [urkund@oulu.fi](mailto:urkund@oulu.fi)

## 2.3 Theses to be published in the Acta Universitatis Ouluensis series

If the thesis is to be published in the Acta Universitatis Ouluensis series, the doctoral candidate must submit the materials to the editors of the series at the latest six weeks prior to the thesis defence date. Furthermore, the printed doctoral thesis must be submitted to the opponent(s) and Custos around two weeks prior to the thesis defence. The printed thesis must also be placed on public display for ten days prior to the thesis defence. If you plan to publish your doctoral thesis in the Acta Universitatis Ouluensis series, please contact the [series editor](http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/17697) (<http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/17697>).

- Make a publication agreement (in duplicate) and handle all the other tasks connected to the publication.
- In any issues pertaining to publications services, please contact [acta.toimitus@oulu.fi](mailto:acta.toimitus@oulu.fi).
- Write an abstract of the doctoral thesis in both Finnish and English.

In the case of theses published in the Acta Universitatis Ouluensis series, the University of Oulu will pay for the number of copies needed for free distribution (17 copies) and 15 author's copies, or a total of 32 copies. The printing house will make three doctoral candidate's folders for the doctoral thesis defence, which will also be paid for by the university. The doctoral candidate must pay for any additional copies, as well as for the costs of any special layout services, or colour pages.

The price of the additional copies will be determined based on the number of pages. You can calculate a price estimate using [Juvenes Print's price calculator](http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/17401) (<http://www.oulu.fi/kirjasto/node/17401>). For more information on the price of layout services and additional copies, please contact the printing house. If your unit or another party will pay for some of the additional copies, you should notify the invoicing department of Juvenes Print of this in advance.

The janitor will notify the author by email when the copies can be collected at the main lobby of the Linnanmaa campus. For more information on mandatory distribution (recipients and number of copies), please see below. The janitors will take care of the distribution in the case of recipients 1–4. The printing house will send free copies to the National Library. In addition, the author must pick up at the main lobby 17 copies of the thesis (including the free copies for the doctoral candidate and the folders) and submit two of them to his/her research unit, department, or similar.

Mandatory distribution of doctoral theses (recipients and number of copies):

Recipient	Copies
1. Library of the University of Oulu	4
2. Research and Communication Services	2
3. Series editor	1

4. Faculty: noticeboard, archives	2
5. Free copies	6
6. Unit, department, ... etc.	2
Total	17

## 2.4 Theses to be published in other publication series

In the case of theses published in series other than *Acta Universitatis Ouluensis*, the University of Oulu will pay for the mandatory publication copies (16 copies) and the author's copies (15 copies), a total of 31 copies. The compensation to be paid will be based on the mean price of *Acta* series publications, €5.50/publication (including VAT of 24%). The maximum compensation to be paid is €170.50.

The compensation will be paid based on an invoice sent by the doctoral candidate and receipts showing the printing costs. The free-form compensation application must include the author's address and bank account number, the original printing house's invoice and a receipt showing that the invoice has been paid. The application must be sent to *Editor Kirsti Nurkkala, Academic Library Pegasus, PO Box 7500, FI-90014 University of Oulu, Finland*. Internal address: *Publications Services/OYK*

The cover of the publication must include *University of Oulu Graduate School*.

Mandatory distribution of doctoral theses (recipients and number of copies):

Doctoral candidates whose theses are published in a series other than the *Acta* series must distribute their theses to the following recipients themselves:

1. 4 copies via internal mail to OYK/theses (or personally to the service point of Academic Library Pegasus on the first floor)
2. 1 copy to Research Services and 1 copy to Communication Services
3. 2 copies to the doctoral candidate's own unit or department
4. 2 copies to the doctoral candidate's faculty (for the noticeboard and the archives)

Furthermore, all Finnish printing houses will send the statutory 6 free copies to the National Library. If the thesis is printed in a printing house outside of Finland, the free copies may be sent to the library of the University of Oulu, and the university library will handle the distribution of the free copies.

## 2.5 Erratum – revisions to a printed doctoral thesis

The generally used practice in the case of revisions made after printing of the doctoral thesis, but before the thesis defence, is to prepare a separate appendix called an "Erratum". The Erratum will be enclosed as a separate page with the printed copies of the doctoral thesis. In the case of the *Acta* series, the Erratum is a separate PDF file with a link on the doctoral thesis' description page (see [example 1 \(http://jultika.oulu.fi/Record/isbn978-952-62-0388-1\)](http://jultika.oulu.fi/Record/isbn978-952-62-0388-1), [example 2 \(http://jultika.oulu.fi/Record/isbn978-951-42-6127-5\)](http://jultika.oulu.fi/Record/isbn978-951-42-6127-5)).

## 3 Communication about the doctoral thesis and the public defence

The doctoral candidate prepares a press release for publication in newspapers, written in plain, every-day language, and announcing the doctoral thesis and its public defence. The press release will also be published on the website of the University of Oulu.

A link for creating the press release and submitting it is available on the website of the [Communication Services of the University of Oulu \(http://www.oulu.fi/yliopisto/viestinta/vaitostiedottaminen\)](http://www.oulu.fi/yliopisto/viestinta/vaitostiedottaminen).

The press release must be a brief description of the doctoral research. The maximum length of the press release is one page. The press release must be submitted to the Communication Services of the University of Oulu at the latest ten days prior to the doctoral thesis defence date. A photo of the doctoral candidate must be enclosed.

## 4 Doctoral thesis defence – regulations and guidelines

### 4.1 Purpose of a public doctoral thesis defence

A doctoral thesis must always be defended in public (section 22 of the Government Decree on University Degrees). There are three main goals for a public doctoral thesis defence:

- To publicly and as reliably as possible verify that the doctoral candidate has personally written a thesis whose academic value corresponds to the general requirements for doctoral theses.
- To offer the official opponent and any other people interested in the subject matter the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the contents of the doctoral thesis by listening to the author, offering the author their observations, asking questions from the author and discussing the thesis with the author
- To celebrate the published research results in a visible manner that deviates from the day-to-day routines of the university

The doctoral thesis defence should be an event where two (or three) academics, who are experts in their field, discuss the subject matter of the doctoral thesis. An enlightened layman should be able to follow the main themes of the discussion and understand the subject matter.

The opponent and the discussion at the doctoral thesis defence do not influence the quality of the doctoral thesis, but they do influence the approval and grade of the thesis. The thesis defence is a way to study how well the author is able to justify his/her choices and views, and analyse the links between the research presented in the thesis and the discipline in general.

### 4.2 Language of the doctoral thesis defence

The custos will determine the language to be used at the thesis defence after having discussed the issue with the doctoral candidate and the opponent. The language must be Finnish, Swedish, or the language in which the doctoral thesis was written. The doctoral thesis defence may also be held in a language other than these, provided that the doctoral candidate agrees to this. Based on a separate agreement, the opponent and the doctoral candidate may also use different languages at the thesis defence.

### 4.3 Progress of the doctoral thesis defence

These instructions are based on the doctoral thesis defence traditions of the University of Oulu, but they have been revised to reflect the current practices. The custos provides instructions to the doctoral candidate and the opponent on what will happen during the thesis defence.

The thesis defence will start 15 minutes past the hour, unless otherwise determined for a justified reason (such as due to the thesis defence being for a double degree or a degree involving several universities with a video connection to the partner university), at which time the audience will already be seated.

The doctoral candidate will enter the hall first, followed by the custos and the opponent. The people seated in the lecture hall will stand up to honour them.

The custos and the opponent – if their degrees have been conferred by a Finnish university – will hold their doctoral hat in their right hand when entering and exiting the hall. A custos or opponent who has graduated from a university outside of Finland may use their own doctoral outfit and hat. The hats must be placed on a table with the lyre emblem turned towards the audience for the duration of the thesis defence.

As a general rule, the opponent should be addressed formally, but the opponent may propose a less formal approach, for example at the beginning of the thesis defence.

## Opening the doctoral thesis defence

When all parties are settled (with the doctoral candidate to the left of the custos), they will stand up, and the custos will welcome the audience with a free-form speech and briefly present the opponent(s) and the doctoral candidate. Next, the custos will officially open the doctoral thesis defence by saying:

*"As the custos appointed by the University of Oulu Graduate School, I hereby declare the doctoral thesis defence of 'title name xx' opened."*

After these opening words, everybody except for the doctoral candidate will sit down.

## Doctoral candidate's speech (*lectio praecursoria*)

The doctoral candidate will give the *lectio praecursoria*, or presentation of the doctoral thesis, standing up. During the *lectio praecursoria*, the doctoral candidate describes the background of the research and its connections to academic or practical problems. The *lectio praecursoria* should last between ten and twenty minutes. If the opponent does not speak Finnish, he/she should be given a translation, or summary, of the *lectio praecursoria*. Out of courtesy, the members of the audience enter the hall before the thesis defence starts, and do not leave during the *lectio praecursoria*.

The doctoral candidate will start the speech by saying:

*"Mr./Madam custos, Mr./Madam opponent, ladies and gentlemen."*

At the end of the speech, the doctoral candidate will say:

*"Dear Professor (Doctor, etc.) xx, as the opponent named by the University of Oulu Graduate School, I now call upon you to present your critical comments on my doctoral thesis."*

## Opening speech of the opponent

The opponent stands up and gives a brief opening statement in which he/she will discuss the subject matter of the thesis, its position and its significance in academia, and its possible practical relevance. The candidate remains standing during the opponents opening speech. The opponent then announces that he/she will now review the thesis in detail. The opponent and the doctoral candidate will then both sit down.

If there is more than one opponent, they should agree on the division of their duties and announce it during the opening speech. As a general rule, the more senior academic of the opponents gives the opening speech and starts the review of the work.

## Examining the doctoral thesis

The opponent will then examine the doctoral thesis, first paying attention to general issues – such as the selection of the research theme, research methods and data – and then going into the details.

The candidate should defend his/her thesis to the best of his/her ability, as the success of the defence will be reflected in the opponent's statement issued later.

The total duration of the doctoral thesis defence should not exceed four (4) hours. The opponent may use a maximum of three (3) hours for his/her examination of the thesis. If it appears that the event will last more than three hours, a break will be taken. The custos will announce the break.

## Concluding speech of the opponent

After completing the examination of the thesis, the opponent gives a summary in which he/she evaluates the significance of the contribution of the doctoral thesis to the discipline.

Having concluded the examination, the opponent (and the candidate) stands up and gives the concluding statement. The opponent will then sit down. The candidate remains standing.

## Concluding words of the doctoral candidate

Having listened to the opponent's statement, the doctoral candidate thanks the opponent and turns towards the audience to say:

*"I now cordially invite anybody who has comments regarding my doctoral thesis to offer their comments by asking the floor from the custos."*

## Possible extra opponents

All persons present at the event will then have the right to ask to take the floor from the custos. A person asking for permission to speak in this way is referred to as an *extra opponent*. The custos gives the floor to the extra opponents and presides over the ensuing discussion(s).

When giving the floor, the custos asks the extra opponent to first introduce him-/herself by stating his/her name and title. The extra opponent is then permitted to state his/her question, comment, or criticism.

The doctoral candidate must be given the opportunity to answer each criticism immediately after the criticism has been made. The opponent may also participate in the discussion if he/she wishes.

A maximum of one hour may be allocated to interventions by the extra opponents. In order to keep the discussion within the set time limit, and to provide all extra opponents the opportunity to express their comments, the custos ensures that each intervention is brief, relevant to the subject matter, and substantive. If necessary, the custos may ask an extra opponent to terminate his/her speech if the comments, or the discussion resulting from them, are not substantive.

The custos may invite an extra opponent to submit possibly extensive or multi-dimensional comments on academic or ethical issues in writing, within two weeks. Such written comments may provide more background or further detail.

For each extra opponent, the custos uses a [dedicated form](http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS_Thesispermission_PartC_1.pdf) (at [http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS\\_Thesispermission\\_PartC\\_1.pdf](http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS_Thesispermission_PartC_1.pdf)) to record the name, title, and contact information, and a summary of the key content of the comment and eventual subsequent discussion. If necessary, the custos may ask the extra opponents to summarise their key criticisms at the end of their address.

The custos ensures that hard copies of this form are available for use at the thesis defence venue, or the form must be readily available in electronic format.

After the event, the custos submits the completed forms to the Chief Academic Officer, who will forward them to the Doctoral Training Committee and the opponent. The opponent takes the observation(s) of the extra opponent(s), and the response(s) of the candidate, into account when preparing his/her final statement, and assesses whether they should influence the statement.

## Concluding the doctoral thesis defence

The custos will conclude the event by saying:

*"I declare the public defence of the doctoral thesis to be concluded."*

# 5 Instructions and traditions regarding the doctoral thesis defence and thesis defence party

## 5.1 Prior to the doctoral thesis defence

The doctoral candidate should familiarize him-/herself with the formalities of the doctoral thesis defence prior to the defence date.

Although the defence date is an important day for the doctoral candidate, the latter should keep in mind that the opponent is the day's guest of honour who must be treated as such throughout the day.

### 5.1.1 Booking a venue

The hall in which the thesis defence will take place should be booked through the janitor as soon as the thesis defence date has been set. The doctoral candidate must agree on any "tools" needed in advance with the janitors. Most halls at the university include an overhead projector, a wide-screen television projector, a computer and a sound system, but it is wise to check on their availability beforehand. The doctoral candidate must also ensure that there are beverages, flowers and a photographer (if required) for the thesis defence, unless the faculty or research unit has a support person who takes care of these issues.

### 5.1.2 Coffee or sparkling wine

The doctoral candidate traditionally offers coffee or sparkling wine to the audience after the doctoral thesis defence. When the thesis defence has been concluded, the doctoral candidate will invite the audience to a “cocktail”, or coffee event. The easiest way to arrange this is to use the university restaurant services. A separate table should be reserved for the more honored guests, such as the custos, opponent, etc. Sparkling wine may also be served in the corridor next to the venue.

### 5.1.3 Arranging a doctoral thesis defence party

It is tradition that the doctoral candidate arranges a party to honour the opponent(s) on the evening of the thesis defence day. The party usually starts at 6 or 8 pm, depending on the schedule of the doctoral candidate and opponent(s). The venue is usually a restaurant, but arranging the party at home, or elsewhere, is also possible.

Arrangements need to be made for the party: invitations, the venue, catering and possibly some entertainment. Depending on the venue and the programme, decorations, lighting, a sound system, a band or orchestra, etc. may also be needed. The speeches to be given at the party (such as a thank you speech to the opponent) should be prepared in advance.

If the venue is a restaurant, the personnel will assist in the selection of the menu. You should ask for offers from several different venues to make sure that the quality of the catering and the price will not be a surprise. The menu usually consists of an appetizer, a main course, a dessert and coffee/tea. The party usually starts with a toast of welcome, which may be sparkling wine, regular wine or a cocktail, for example. Wine and iced water are usually served during the meal. A non-alcoholic option should always be available. Special diets should also be taken into account. Do not forget table placement cards (and maps), if they are needed.

The doctoral candidate traditionally pays for the thesis defence party. However, the doctoral candidate may also pay only for the dinner of the opponent and custos, in which case the other guests will pay for their meals, in whole or in part, in the form of an admission card. Usually other people will join the party after the official programme, or the party continues at another venue. The guests are usually expected to pay for their own drinks at the after-party.

### 5.1.4 Invitations to the doctoral thesis defence party

The opponent(s) and the custos are naturally guests at the party, with the opponent being the guest of honour. Other people to be invited include the supervisors of the thesis and any co-authors of the publications included therein. It is also polite to invite the reviewers, the follow-up group (or its chairperson) and any other people who have clearly contributed to the doctoral thesis, such as members of the research team and support persons. The guest list usually also includes the doctoral candidate’s spouse, parents and closest friends. The easiest way is to use the same invitation to invite people to both the doctoral thesis defence and the party. You should clearly indicate whether the invitation is personal, or plus one. According to traditional etiquette, an invitation to the party should not be given until after the thesis defence, but in practice the invitation should be sent before to facilitate the catering and other arrangements. The invitation must include the exact address of the party venue and the dress code. Make sure that the opponent and custos know how to find the venue. The custos could also pick up the opponent at the hotel and accompany him/her to the party venue.

Invitation template:

*Welcome to my doctoral thesis defence  
on xx xx 20xx at xx:xx  
in xx (address xx)  
and, should you be able to attend, a thesis defence party in honour of my opponent, Professor xx,  
on xx xx 20xx at xx:xx  
in xx (address xx)  
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE’S NAME  
RSVP by xx xx, tel. xx or xx@xx.fi  
White tie, doctoral hat/Black tie, doctoral hat  
Diet limitations will be taken into account*

### 5.1.5 Dress code for the doctoral thesis defence

Agree on the dress code for the doctoral thesis defence with the custos and opponent (Table 1). The custos makes the final decision on the dress code.

The custos, opponent(s) and doctoral candidate should follow the same dress code (alternative 1 or 2); an exception to this rule is a person who has graduated from a non-Finnish university: they may use their own doctoral outfit that may include a cape or a hat, for example. A male doctoral candidate, custos or opponent should wear a tailcoat and black vest or a black business suit. A female doctoral candidate, custos or opponent should wear a black pant suit, a knee-length black skirt/dress, or a jacket suit. The dress should not be very low-cut or otherwise too "revealing". A black jacket may be used over the dress, or blouse and skirt. If the male participants wear a tailcoat, the female participants may also wear an ankle-length dress. The dress code for a doctoral promotion ceremony should be used.

Table 1. Dress code alternatives for a doctoral thesis defence.

Alternative	Male doctoral candidate, custos or opponent	Female doctoral candidate, custos or opponent
1	A tailcoat and black vest, white bow tie, no pocket handkerchief, no patent-leather shoes, black socks, no wrist watch	A black ankle-length dress/jacket suit, or black knee-length dress/skirt, or jacket suit, no hat, no large jewellery
2	A black suit and dark necktie	A black knee-length dress/skirt or black jacket suit

The research unit or faculty may pay for the opponent's costume rental, but the doctoral candidate and custos must pay for their own clothes. The practices of the faculties in this issue vary.

There is no specific dress code for the audience of the doctoral thesis defence. The thesis defence is an event that is open to everyone, so regular, everyday clothes are considered to be appropriate. Guests invited by the doctoral candidate often wear a black tie, or other festive outfit.

### 5.1.6 Caring for the opponent

The doctoral candidate should submit the final bound version of the doctoral thesis to the opponent(s) as soon as it has been received from the printing house. This copy of the thesis is usually printed so late that the opponent will only have time to browse through it. If the opponent comes from abroad, instructions on the doctoral thesis defence, its duration and an abstract of the *lectio praecursoria* should be sent to them beforehand.

Traditionally, the doctoral candidate act as the host or hostess of the opponent(s). The opponent may need help in travel arrangements, such as purchasing the airplane tickets, or for transportation from the airport to the hotel. For accommodation in Oulu, you should find out with which hotels the university has an accommodation agreement. Some faculties or research units have a named travel arrangement support person. Sometimes the custos also acts as the host. Travel and accommodation costs of the opponent are covered by the faculty or research unit.

The research unit or faculty may want to offer the opponent a lunch on the thesis defence day or some other cordial reception. The candidate should meet with the opponent at dinner on the day preceding the thesis defence, for example, to get to know him/her and review the schedule of the defence day. This dinner is usually arranged by the custos, or the candidate's principal supervisor. At this time, you could also agree on how you will address the opponent (unless agreed otherwise, they should be addressed formally).

### 5.1.7 Preparing for the doctoral thesis defence

As a doctoral candidate, it is strongly recommended that, before defending your own thesis, you attend the defence of your friends and colleagues in your faculty. This not only demonstrates your respect and support for your peers, but also helps you to familiarize yourself with how the event proceeds, get some ideas for the content, structure and presentation of your *lectio praecursoria*, discover the nature of the issues the opponent may raise and, perhaps, get tips on how to actually defend your own thesis.

With the help of your close colleagues and supervisor(s), you should also analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your thesis objectively, paying particular attention to issues raised during the pre-examination of the thesis by the reviewers, and prepare any counter-arguments to differing opinions and interpretations of your work. It is recommended to rehearse for the doctoral thesis

defence, or at least to practice answering questions. Your supervisors could be very good *stand-ins* for the opponent during these rehearsals, because they not only know your work well, but also understand its broader context. Some faculties also arrange practice thesis defences for their students, but you could also arrange less formal practice sessions by asking a couple of colleagues to read your thesis and ask you questions about it (be sure to return the favour if they ask you to do the same for them).

You should make a PowerPoint presentation of the most important figures and tables in your thesis for the defence day. You might also add notes, outlining answers to likely question, to your own copy of the thesis that you will take with you to the defence.

The *lectio praecursoria* must be prepared in advance. It should introduce the subject matter of your doctoral thesis in a way that can be understood by an educated member of the general public. If the doctoral candidate's native language is Finnish, the *lectio praecursoria* is usually given in Finnish, even if the language of the doctoral thesis defence is not Finnish. In other cases, the presentation is given in the language to be used with the opponent during the doctoral thesis defence.

You should keep in mind the fact that the *lectio praecursoria* may be the only part of the whole doctoral thesis defence that is understood by all those present at the event. Although not required, a PowerPoint presentation is frequently useful for highlighting and illustrating the main points of the *lectio praecursoria*.

## 5.2 At the doctoral thesis defence

### 5.2.1 Morning before the doctoral thesis defence

The doctoral candidate should visit the venue with the custos and the opponent(s) before the thesis defence, such as on the morning of the defence day to see how you will be able to move about in the room, and where the tables, podiums, etc. are. The doctoral candidate should also check that all the necessary equipment (wide-screen television projector, computer, sound system, microphones, notebooks, pens, etc.) is available and in working order. If the doctoral candidate needs some help with a PowerPoint presentation, etc., he/she should agree on this in advance with a colleague. The doctoral candidate should also check that all the necessary decorations and beverages are available.

It is good to have the first slide of the *lectio praecursoria* presentation ready on the screen when people come in, which shows the doctoral candidate's name, faculty, the name of the thesis and the names of the opponent and custos. The doctoral candidate can also add the same slide at the end of the *lectio praecursoria* presentation and leave the projector on for the duration of the discussion.

In case of problems, the custos should check the university's safety instructions on Notio ([for what to do in case of an accident or dangerous situation](https://notio.oulu.fi/fi/ohjeet/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/fi/ohjeet/Documents/TOIMINTA_ohjeet_2013.pdf&action=default)) at [https://notio.oulu.fi/fi/ohjeet/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/fi/ohjeet/Documents/TOIMINTA\\_ohjeet\\_2013.pdf&action=default](https://notio.oulu.fi/fi/ohjeet/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/fi/ohjeet/Documents/TOIMINTA_ohjeet_2013.pdf&action=default)) and have the contact information of the janitors ([https://sa.oulu.fi/fi/ohjeet/Sivut/\\_Danainfo=notio.oulu.fi,SSL+Tilapalveluiden-yhteystiedot.aspx](https://sa.oulu.fi/fi/ohjeet/Sivut/_Danainfo=notio.oulu.fi,SSL+Tilapalveluiden-yhteystiedot.aspx)) in charge of the venue at hand, just in case. The doctoral thesis defence may also be arranged at a venue outside the University of Oulu, in which case that venue's safety instructions must be taken into account.

A sufficient number of copies of the thesis (40 – 50 is usually sufficient) should be available at the venue for the audience, unless it is available in electronic format, in which case the members of the audience may be encouraged to use the electronic copy of the thesis. In the case where hard copies are provided, the doctoral candidate should make sure that somebody will bring them to the venue on time.

### 5.2.2 After the doctoral thesis defence

#### Concluding the doctoral thesis defence

When the custos has concluded the defence by saying:

*"I declare the public defence of the doctoral thesis to be concluded."* (see section 4.3)

the doctoral candidate should remember to invite the audience to the cocktail/coffee event.

The custos and the opponent(s) will then pick up their doctoral hats and the participants will leave the room in the same order as they came in: first the doctoral candidate, followed by the custos and, finally, the opponent. The audience will not clap their hands or applaud in any other way during this event. The audience will wait until the doctoral candidate, custos and opponent have left before

leaving the room. Congratulations will not be expressed until after leaving the room and after the doctoral candidate has had time to thank the opponent and the custos.

### Cocktail event and acknowledgements to the doctoral candidate

It is customary for the doctoral candidate to receive congratulations and flowers outside the doctoral defence venue. The doctoral candidate usually offers cake and coffee/sparkling wine after the doctoral thesis defence to everybody who attended the event. In this event, speeches addressed to the doctoral candidate are given and the candidate receives gifts from the faculty or department, for example. The official speeches are reserved until the thesis defence party.

Each unit and team has its own practices and traditions on how to congratulate the doctoral candidate. The most common practice is, for the doctoral candidate's colleagues collect money from amongst themselves to buy a collective gift. Cash or a gift voucher to buy a doctoral hat is a good and traditional gift. If the research team or other unit of the doctoral candidate wishes to congratulate the candidate, a reasonably priced gift that complies with the legislation and the financial rules of the unit may be given.

The unit may give the doctoral candidate a gift from the university's gift collection or a bouquet of flowers that is kept at the venue for the duration of the thesis defence. The maximum price of such a gift may be €50. The flowers must be purchased from a supplier with whom the University of Oulu has an agreement, and the supplier must send an invoice directly to the university. You should also keep in mind that there is no obligation to give any gift, and the traditions of the research teams and faculties vary.

## 5.3 Doctoral thesis defence party (or "*karonkka*")

### 5.3.1 Dress code for the doctoral thesis defence party

The dress code is usually "*white tie*". For men, this means a tailcoat with a white vest, patent leather shoes and a white pocket handkerchief, while female doctoral candidates and those accompanying men in white tie, a long dress that may be black, or any other discreet colour, is most appropriate. The dress code indicated in the invitation should be followed.

Doctoral thesis defence parties are no longer as formal as they used to be, but the preferences of universities, faculties and doctoral candidates vary a great deal. You should ask for tips from your colleagues and other people who have participated in doctoral thesis defence parties at your unit.

### 5.3.2 Seating at the doctoral thesis defence party

The doctoral candidate will be seated in the middle of the table on the side of their choice. The doctoral candidate never sits at the head of the table. The opponent gets the seat of honour to the right of the doctoral candidate or, if there are two opponents, this is the seat of the senior opponent. The custos of the doctoral thesis defence is seated to the left of the doctoral candidate. If there are two opponents, however, the junior opponent gets this seat and the custos is seated to the right of the senior opponent. The doctoral candidate's relatives and friends are usually seated on the opposite side of the table with the doctoral candidate's spouse directly opposite the candidate.

### 5.3.3 Speeches

Official speeches are usually given during the dinner. The most common time for speeches is after the main course and before the dessert; alternatively, the speeches can be given after the dessert before the coffee and tea. The first speech will be given by the doctoral candidate who will start by thanking the opponent for examining the doctoral thesis and for the valuable observations offered during the public defence of the thesis.

The doctoral candidate will then address the custos of the doctoral thesis defence. The doctoral candidate is free to use the rest of the speech to address any people of their choice, such as the supervisors, co-authors, other people who influenced the creation of the doctoral thesis, their spouse, their parents, etc. The spouse is often addressed at the end of the speech.

The next speech will be given by the opponent, who will only address the doctoral candidate. The third speech will be given by the custos, who will address the doctoral candidate, focusing on their shared experiences, the candidate's studies, and the significance of his/her achievements. Finally, the people addressed by the doctoral candidate usually give their speeches in the order in which they were mentioned by the doctoral candidate.

### 5.3.4 Hat table

An agreement with the custos and opponent on taking doctoral hats to the party should be made. The academic tradition is that there is a separate table at the party which is reserved for doctoral hats. The guests should also be notified about the need to take their doctoral hats with them to the party. Taking the doctoral hats to the party is not mandatory, however.

### 5.3.5 Thank you cards

Thank you cards should be sent to all the people who offered the doctoral candidate flowers or other gifts on the thesis defence day. It is not expected to thank everybody who simply offered their congratulations. Those who contributed most to the doctoral thesis should be given something more substantial than a thank you card; an autographed copy of the doctoral thesis is traditionally considered to be a good token of gratitude. Traditionally, the doctoral candidate's spouse receives flowers on the morning of the defence day, or on the day after, to thank them for sacrificing their valuable family time to the thesis. Although still practiced, this custom is no longer as frequently as it used to be. The custos will know the current traditions and practices of the field.

## 6 Grading of the doctoral thesis

The opponent prepares a written statement using the Graduate School's evaluation criteria at the latest within a week of the doctoral thesis defence. Whenever possible, this should be done immediately after the thesis defence and the cocktail hour, in order to avoid delays in the graduation of the candidate. The opponent submits the statement and the proposed grade to the Chief Academic Officer.

- The principal supervisor/custos should remind the opponent in advance that writing the statement right after the thesis defence is recommended. Further details regarding the thesis defence itself can, if needed, be added to the statement later.
- The opponent also fills in a form assessing the doctoral thesis and the thesis defence, and recommending a grade to be given for the thesis by the Doctoral Training Committee.
- The opponent submit his/her statement and the proposed grade to the Chief Academic Officer, who will forward them to the supervisor, the doctoral degree programme director and the doctoral candidate.
- Before the grade is actually given by the Doctoral Training Committee, the doctoral candidate will be given the opportunity to submit a response, with any justified objections, to the opponent's statement.

The Chief Academic Officer will present the opponent's statement and proposed grading for discussion at a meeting of the Doctoral Training Committee.

The Doctoral Training Committee grades the doctoral thesis based on the opponent's statement. When grading the thesis, the Doctoral Training Committee may also use the transcripts of statements made by extra opponents at the doctoral thesis defence, and any other expert statements that may have been requested (KJ §16). The Doctoral Training Committee must also take into account the statements by the reviewers during the pre-examination of the doctoral thesis.

The grades that can be awarded to the doctoral thesis are *"Fail"*, *"Pass"*, and *"Excellent"*. The grade *"Excellent"* is reserved for doctoral theses of an exceptionally high standard, and is given to only about 15% of all the doctoral theses approved by the Doctoral Training Committee.

To be approved with the grade *"Excellent"*, the doctoral thesis must have exceptional academic merits, the results must be of exceptional significance for the field of study, at least one of the articles of the dissertation (in the case of a compilation thesis) must be published in high-quality peer reviewed journals, and the public defence of the doctoral thesis must have been excellent. The time taken to complete the research included in the doctoral thesis may also influence the grade. Furthermore, in order to receive the grade *"Excellent"*, it must be recommended by at least two of the individuals appointed as the doctoral thesis experts, of which one must be the opponent.

The Chief Academic Officer will notify the student, the principal supervisor (and the degree supervisor, if applicable) and the doctoral degree programme director, of the decision.

The student may submit a request for amendment to the Board of Examiners within 14 days of having been notified of the grade.

## 7 Graduating and delivery of the diploma

The candidate may pick up the doctoral diploma once all of the courses included in the degree have been completed and entered into the official study record, and the doctoral thesis has been approved and graded. The student requests delivery of the diploma by filling in a “*diploma request*” and submitting it to the Chief Academic Officer. In order to receive the diploma, the candidate must be enrolled as a “present” at the university for the semester.

The service point will prepare the diploma, a transcript of the study record in Finnish and English, and a diploma supplement in English. The Dean of the Graduate School grants the doctoral degree and signs the diploma.

The diploma can be collected from the faculty’s service point, at the latest 24 days after a meeting of the Doctoral Training Committee at which the thesis was approved and graded. The meeting times are available on the [website of the Graduate School](#). An agreement on using an earlier date in the diploma may also be made. The diploma can also be sent by mail on request.

## 8 Promotion ceremony

The promotion ceremony is by far the largest regular academic celebration at the university. Anyone who has obtained a doctorate from the university, but has not been “promoted”, may attend the promotion ceremony. In addition to those who have recently obtained their doctorate, the ceremony is attended by people who have received honorary doctorates from the university.

The promotion ceremony takes place over the course of three days. On the evening of the first day, there is an event called the sword honing ceremony (“*miekanhiojaiset*”). The main event, the conferment of the doctorates, takes place on the second day. During this day, the graduates and their families take part in a procession in downtown Oulu and attend a celebratory church service. A dinner and a ball are arranged in the evening. A “promotion sailing event”, including a fun-filled excursion on the water, takes place on the third day.

## APPENDIX 1: Reviewer invitation template

SUBJECT: doctoral thesis review request from University of Oulu

Dear Prof. NN,

I would like to invite you to serve as an external reviewer for M.Sc. NN's doctoral thesis tentatively entitled as "WORKING TITLE HEREIN". The thesis has been co-supervised by myself and Dr. NN and is based on the X original publications listed below (and some as yet unpublished content in the form of a manuscript). A draft of the thesis abstract can be found below.

The thesis will be finalized within a couple of weeks and will then be submitted for review. We would need to get the reviewer's evaluations and statements within two months from the date of submission.

As a reviewer your task would be to evaluate the suitability of the manuscript to be a doctoral thesis. In other words, the external reviewer is expected to give constructive criticism on the thesis and recommend if it is good enough to be defended in public - possibly after some revisions. The [official guidelines are available here](http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS_Guide_for_reviewers_and_opponents.pdf):  
[http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS\\_Guide\\_for\\_reviewers\\_and\\_opponents.pdf](http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS_Guide_for_reviewers_and_opponents.pdf).

I would be truly grateful if you could review the thesis. If you are able to accept this invitation, you would receive a small honorarium upon completion of the task.

I would greatly appreciate timely feedback with respect to your availability, and I would be happy to provide any further information you may need before giving a definitive response.

Best regards,

NN, Principal Supervisor

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

WORKING ABSTRACT

## APPENDIX 2: Opponent invitation template

SUBJECT: invitation to serve as an opponent at University of Oulu

Dear Prof. NN,

I would like to invite you to serve as the opponent (oral examiner) for NN's doctoral thesis entitled as "TITLE HERE". The thesis has been co-supervised by myself and Dr. NN.

The manuscript, which is now in external review is attached to this message. There may be some revisions based on the on-going external review and probably some language corrections that need to be made before final printing. The abstract and an updated list of original papers to be included in the the thesis can also be found below.

The official guidelines for the opponents are available at [http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS\\_Guide\\_%20for\\_reviewers\\_and\\_opponents.pdf](http://www.oulu.fi/sites/default/files/content/UniOGS_Guide_%20for_reviewers_and_opponents.pdf)

The opponent examines the doctoral candidate, in public, about the thesis research and also its relation to the wider context of the research field. One of the important tasks of the opponent(s) is to evaluate and propose a grade for the final version of the thesis.

I would be truly honoured and grateful if you could accept to undertake this task. If you are able to accept this invitation, we would cover your travel and accommodation expenses and provide a small honorarium. The defense is currently planned to take place during the first/second half of MONTH, or if that does not work out, then preferably during .....

If you need any further information before making a firm decision, or if you have any preferences/limitations with respect to the schedule, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

NN, Principal Supervisor

ABSTRACT

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS