

**PROCESS OF THESIS DEFENSES
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DEFENSES****ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT**

- The President has one vote and participates in the deliberation.
The jury takes its decisions in a sovereign and collegial manner. Decisions are taken by a simple majority.
In the event of a tie, the President has the casting vote;
- His/her role:
 - He/she guarantees the proper conduct of the private defense and the public defense and the respect of the regulations for the award of the doctorate;
 - He/she is at the disposal of the members of the jury for any academic question relating to the defenses;
 - He/she explains the rules of operation, gives the floor to the members of the jury and to the candidate, ensures that a collegial decision is taken after the private defense and that it is followed up, and ensures that the registers and other official documents are signed by all the members of the jury and by the PhD student;
 - If one of the members of the jury cannot be present at the public defense, the President will ask him/her for his/her opinion and for the questions he/she would like to ask.

ROLE OF THE JURY MEMBERS

They participate in the private and the public defenses.

They provide for the private defense a series of questions and remarks on the written text of the thesis submitted by the candidate, bearing in mind that the intervention of the jury member should not exceed 10 to 15 minutes in order to allow the candidate to respond.

No written documents should be left in the file, but if written notes are taken, they may be given to the candidate between the two defenses, if they may be useful for the adaptation of the text.

The Specific PhD examination boards are appointed for all stages of the thesis defense (private defense and public defense). Except in cases of “force majeure”, no changes to the composition of the board or its role are possible.

PRIVATE DEFENSE

The purpose of this private defense is to allow the jury to appreciate the quality of the written work of the thesis and to ask all the questions it wishes about the text.

At the end of this defense, a decision must be taken by the jury: whether or not to accept the public defense; if so, with or without minor modifications to the submitted text.

The entire jury is present at the private defense (physically or virtually, e.g. by video conference).

The classic procedure does not include a presentation by the candidate. Instead, questions from the jury members are asked directly. There are two options:

- Each member of the jury asks all of his or her questions and interacts with the candidate;
- The jury members go round the table for the first time, and then come back for a second or even third round or for more informal discussions, which build on each other's questions.

The procedure is quite flexible.

The chairperson of the jury can decide this in the meeting with the members of the jury.

Traditionally, a few minutes are taken, in camera without the candidate being present, to decide on these procedures and to remind the jury of the procedure and the decisions to be taken.

The president of the jury explains to all members the evaluation of the thesis, as well as the 20-point evaluation scale. In summary, the mark is made up of 2/3 for the written part, and 1/3 for the oral part (private defense and public defense). The calculation of the overall mark (out of 100 points) will be done at the end of the public defense.

It is also a question of agreeing the order of speaking.

Here, as this is a private defense, and the external members of the jury have not had the opportunity to interact with the candidates beforehand, unlike the members of the committee, they are given the floor first, leaving them sufficient time.

On average, it is expected that a private defense for five jury members will last two hours (plus or minus twenty minutes, including questions and answers per jury member, bearing in mind that external guests may take longer, and that the promoter asks hardly any questions at this stage).

At the end of the private defense, the candidate leaves the room and the members of the jury deliberate.

This is where the decision is made as to whether the thesis is admissible and accepted for public defense:

- If so, it is a matter of deciding
 - whether the submitted text can be considered as the final thesis text or
 - if the jury requires certain minor modifications.
 - If the thesis is deemed acceptable with modifications to the text, the sponsor(s) are responsible for checking and approving these modifications before the date of the public defense.
 - The implementation of these modifications may not exceed three months of full-time work.
- If not, then a new private defense must be organised.

If minor changes are requested, the chairperson will ensure that they are summarised with the promoter and will instruct the promoter to check that they have been made before the final text is printed and sent to the members of the jury 15 days before the public defense.

If changes are not required, the jury can then judge the written thesis.

Each member of the jury gives a mark out of 20 points, which will be worth 6/9 of the final grade of the doctorate.

The jury members also give a mark out of 20 points for the private defense (oral component, which will be worth 2/6 of the final mark).

These marks remain individual and are placed in envelopes that will only be opened after the private defense.

Under no circumstances may a member of the jury be awarded a specific mark.

PUBLIC DEFENSE

The total duration of the session may not exceed three hours.

At least half of the members of the specific jury actively participate in the public defense of the thesis.
The absent members send a written report to the president before the session, with a reasoned opinion on the value of the thesis and an inventory of the questions they wish to ask the candidate.

The president of the jury meets the members of the jury in camera 15 minutes before the public defense.
He/she ensures the evaluation of the written text, if minor modifications have been requested on the written text.
He/she organises the order of the discussions after the candidate's presentation.

Traditionally, each member of the jury wears a toga.

In the public session, the president reminds the jury of its composition and invites the candidate to present his/her thesis in 20 to 30 minutes.

He/she then gives the floor to the different members of the jury in succession.

He/she ensures that the timing defined beforehand is respected.

At the end, he allows any doctor in the assembly who wishes to do so to ask a question.

The jury then retires to deliberate and returns to announce the result.

During the closed deliberation, the chairperson evaluates the oral presentation and awards an overall mark out of 100 points: 6/9 for the written presentation (average of the marks awarded by the members of the jury), 2/9 for the private defense (oral component, average of the marks awarded by the members of the jury) and 1/9 for the public defense (oral component, average of the marks awarded by the members of the jury).

These marks are not discussed.

An exchange may take place, but this does not result in any changes to the marks.

The President shall ensure that the various documents are signed.

Then, back in the room, the president proclaimed the success of the doctoral thesis and ensured that the diplomas were signed.

He/she then invites all those present to a drink of friendship (place to be specified at a later date).