



THESIS DEFENSE

What is the Ph.D thesis?

The Ph.D. thesis is the intended outcome of the doctoral training period. Your thesis must give account of your scientific work and meet the quality standards established by the Academic Committee of the program.

What is the Ph.D thesis defense?

It involves presenting the doctoral research work (objectives, achievements, method, results...) in a public academic event before an expert Court that will evaluate the work and the exhibition.

Prior to the development of the academic act, it is necessary to comply with a series of steps:

Approval of the thesis by the thesis directors, Review of the thesis by external experts, Approval of the thesis by the CAPD, Pass the plagiarism analysis, Deposit the thesis with the academic community, Obtain the approval of the thesis defense and the evaluation panel.

When can I start the thesis defense process?

As a general rule, you must have been enrolled on your Ph.D. program for at least 24 months before initiating the thesis defense proceedings.

You must bear in mind that the deposit of the thesis must begin before your maximum period of permanence in the Doctoral Program expires (please check your deadline and start the process **at least two and a half months in advance**).

What is the deadline for depositing the thesis?

It depends on the date you started your studies and your dedication to the doctoral project: there is a maximum period of 5 years - including an extension of one final year - if your dedication is "full time"; There is a maximum period of 8 years - including an extension of one final year - if your dedication is "part-time" (in mixed cases, the maximum period will depend on the dates). Please check your deadline well in advance - in your electronic file - to properly schedule the final stages.

I have approval to proceed to the thesis defense. Which timeline do I have to consider?

Once you comply with the requirements to initiate the process, a **minimum of 15 weeks** (University holidays period not included) is normally necessary to carry out the entire process:

1. Defense request to the Academic Committee of the PhD Program, along with the thesis document and a proposal of two external experts to issue their reports.
2. Reports received by the external experts (4-8 weeks approx.)
3. Plagiarism management (2 weeks approx.)
4. Thesis deposit (2 weeks)
5. Approval of thesis defense and appointment of Thesis Committee (1 week approx.)
6. Organization of the defense session (2 weeks approx.)
7. Defense session

How do I start the process to defend the thesis?

You must have the final document "doctoral thesis" with the approval of your thesis director/s and make a request to the Doctoral Program (by electronic means, through SIGMA, or through the Doctoral School Management Office).

You must have the final thesis document, check that all the information related to your doctoral file is correct (tutor, director, title of the thesis, etc.), review and finalize the Doctoral Activity Report that resides on the SIGMA electronic platform, prepare your CV and the required technical and non-technical summaries and, with the help of your director(s), prepare a proposal for external reviewers that is accepted by the Academic Committee of the PhD Program.

What does "prior review by external experts" consist of?

The doctoral thesis must be informed by external reviewers-evaluators, at the beginning of the process. Therefore, you must prepare, with the help of your thesis director(s), a proposal for reviewers, which the Academic Committee will approve or modify, and finally request the reports, so that they are prepared within the maximum period of a month.

Further information: [Review by external experts](#)

Should I prepare a new doctoral thesis document, once I have received the recommendations from external experts?

Once the reports are requested and received, the Academic Committee of the PhD Program may suggest changes or additions to the thesis, based on said opinions. You will have one

month to prepare the final thesis document and respond to the Academic Committee with an improvement report.

Once you have received the two reports from external reviewers, this guide provides further details on each stage.

PLAGIARISM CONTROL

What is plagiarism analysis?

To ensure compliance with the principles established in the Code of Good Practice for Managing Plagiarism of Ph.D. Theses of the Doctoral School, all theses must be subjected to a plagiarism control procedure prior to the authorization of the defense.

Once the Academic Committee of your Ph.D. program determines that your research period is finished and your thesis is ready for deposit, a pdf file of the thesis will be submitted to the Doctoral School.

The plagiarism analysis will produce a Coincidence Report and a Reasoned Report of said coincidences, which the Academic Committee will review and approve first, sending the result to the Director of the Doctoral School, so that the plagiarism analysis may be considered satisfactory.

The final document of the thesis that will go through the defense process (deposit, sending to the Evaluation Court and custody in the institutional archive of uc3m) will be the document that has satisfactorily passed the plagiarism control.

The results of this study will be at the disposal of the members of the Thesis Committee, should they be requested.

Further information: [Plagiarism control](#)

THESIS DEPOSIT

What is the thesis deposit?

The thesis deposit enables professors and scholars of your field to review your work before the defense. The period of deposit is 15 days (excluding August), after which all comments and observations by the experts will be reported to the Academic Committee and yourself.

Further information: [Thesis deposit](#)

AUTHORIZATION OF THESIS DEFENSE AND APPOINTMENT OF THESIS COMMITTEE

Who approves the thesis defense?

Once your thesis has successfully passed the previous stages, the Academic Committee of the PhD Program will elaborate their proposal for thesis defense, providing details of the proposed members of the Thesis Committee on the [Authorization of thesis defense and appointment of Thesis Committee](#). Eligibility for “Doctorado Internacional”, “Doctorado Industrial” or International Cotutelle must be indicated, where applicable.

When requirements for these distinctions are met, all supporting documentation will be attached in each case.

This proposal will be submitted for the Dean of the Doctoral School's approval of the thesis defense and the appointment of Thesis Committee members.

Who can be a member of the Thesis Committee?

The Thesis Committee consists of three titular members (President, Secretary, and a spokesperson) and a substitute. All of them must hold a Ph.D. degree and a proven track record in research. In all cases, the Committee will be formed by a majority of members external to the University and to the institutions collaborating with the School or the Ph.D. Program.

The following profiles **cannot** be considered for the Thesis Committee:

- The Ph.D. candidate's tutor or advisor, except in joint degree (cotutelle) instances in which the terms of agreement cover this option.
- The supervisor of the Ph.D. candidate's research visit at the host institution.
- Co-authors of the Ph.D. candidate's publications.

For thesis eligible for the 'Doctorado Internacional' distinction, at least one member of the Committee must be from an institution of higher education or research center outside of Spain, not the student's supervisor at the host institution in any case.

Further information: [Organization of thesis defense. Appointment of Thesis Committee](#)

ORGANIZATION OF THE DEFENSE SESSION

How is the defense session organized?

Once all authorizations and the appointment of the Evaluation Committee have been obtained, the defense date will be agreed. The Doctoral School office will be in charge of organizing the event, developing the necessary logistical activity (reservation of rooms, media, etc.), as well as managing travel and stays of the members of the tribunal. The Doctoral School will announce the date and place of the academic event to the entire community.

15 business days in advance of the defense act, the Doctoral School will also send each of the Committee members a copy of the thesis in digital format.

Do I have to pay any fees prior to the defense?

Yes. The payment of thesis defense fees must be fulfilled before proceeding to it. Additionally, payment of enrollment fees for the academic year in which the defense takes place must be up to date.

Further information: [Organization of thesis defense. Appointment of Thesis Committee](#)

THESIS DEFENSE

How will the defense and evaluation of the thesis be carried out?

The defense act is a public academic act. Once the doctoral student has presented and defended his or her thesis, the committee may provide comments or ask questions to the doctoral student. Subsequently, in a private session, the court will deliberate, which will render a report and an evaluation decision. The grade obtained (Failed, Passed, Notable or Excellent) will be reflected in the defense report.

Additionally, and only in those cases in which the qualification has been Outstanding, the members of the tribunal will proceed to record, by means of a separate and secret vote, their proposal for granting the cum laude mention and, when appropriate, their opinion on the merit of the thesis candidacy for the [Outstanding Thesis Awards](#) of the Carlos III University of Madrid.

How can I apply for my Ph.D. certificate?

Your application for the official Ph.D. degree certificate, issued by the Ministerio de Educación of Spain, is submitted [online](#).

Issuance of your certificate may take several months. Until then, you may apply for a temporary certificate as proof of successful completion of your Ph.D. studies as of the date of your thesis defense.

Where is my Ph.D. thesis published?

Your thesis will be published in [e-archivo](#) (online repository of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid) and [Teseo](#) (Ministerio de Educación thesis database). Any partial or temporary restrictions pertaining to the publication of your thesis must be reported to the university.

