

General information – Public defense of a doctoral thesis

Important! All forms (FO-*.docx, FO-*.pdf) that are requested as part of the process outlined in this document must be printed single-sided (regulation for archiving).

The most recent versions of all forms referred to in this document are found here:

<https://intra.kth.se/administration/blanketter/forskning-forskarutbildning/forskning-och-forskarutbildning-1.302316>

What are the requirements for a doctoral degree?

Before considering to write and defend a doctoral thesis, make sure that the requirements for a doctorate can be obtained on time.

1. Thesis part of 180 ECTS

This would typically correspond to at least:

- Two published or accepted articles in peer-review scientific journals (at least one should be first-authored by the student).
- Two manuscripts in preparation of sufficient quality for publication in peer-review scientific journals (at least one should be first-authored by the student).

2. Course part of 60 ECTS

For students admitted before December 31, 2013

- at least 36 ECTS third-cycle courses
- a maximum of 24 ECTS second- or first cycle courses (no limitation for first-cycle courses)

For students admitted after January 1, 2014

- at least 45 ECTS third-cycle courses
- a maximum of 15 ECTS second- and first-cycle courses, of which no more than 10 ECTS can be first-cycle courses.
- compulsory courses: PhD seminar course of 6 ECTS; LH3000 Basic Communication and Teaching 3.0 credits (for students that teach in cycle 1 or 2)

When can a public thesis defense be scheduled?

Doctoral thesis defenses may only be scheduled during the periods **January 7 to June 15** (spring term), and **August 15 to December 20** (fall term). This means that the intervening periods are deferred, and must be deducted from the plan.

Thus, there is no distinct time advantage to plan the thesis defense sooner than 5 weeks after January 7 or August 15. For this reason, the periods **February 26 to June 15**, and **September 20 to December 20** are preferred for thesis defenses.

Planning the public defense of a doctoral thesis – timeline

Important regarding conflict of interests

See Chapter 7 in the *KTH Guideline on Third Cycle Studies* (riktlinje för utbildning på forskarnivå) for the requirements: <https://intra.kth.se/en/styrning/styrdokument/regler/utbildning-1.1117452>

12 WEEKS (but no later than 8 weeks) before the dissertation defense (5 tasks)

1. Book date and room

Email the local administrator for third-cycle studies for the BIO/TCB PhD programs to book a date for the dissertation defense.

There should preferably not be more than two thesis defenses (doctoral or licentiate) per day on the same third-cycle subject (i.e. *Biotechnology* or *Theoretical Chemistry and Biology*), at least if the defense is targeted towards the same audience. The first typically starts at 10 am, and the second, in the afternoon at 1 pm. Book the room early since the booking calendar fills up quickly.

2. Suggest advance reviewer for the doctoral thesis (form FO-FOGR)

Advance review of the doctoral thesis is mandatory. The supervisor must suggest an advance reviewer, and motivate the choice. This information must be entered in the form FO-FOGR and sent to vice FA/FA for approval.

The principal supervisor is responsible for conducting thesis review and plagiarism control of the thesis (and associated unpublished material) and rectify any deficiencies **before** the thesis is submitted for advance review.

Who can act as advance reviewer?

See Chapter 6.2.6 in the *KTH Guideline on Third Cycle Studies* for the requirements: <https://intra.kth.se/en/styrning/styrdokument/regler/utbildning-1.1117452>

3. Suggest opponent, grading committee, substitute committee member, and chair for the defense

An initial suggestion is emailed to the vice FA or FA for approval. Include title, affiliation, homepage, CV for the suggested persons, as well as the doctoral student's complete list of published papers and manuscripts. The vice FA/FA then evaluates the suitability of the named persons for their respective roles, including possible conflicts of interest. When contacting the opponent and committee members, provide information about articles and manuscripts that will be part of the thesis.

Who can act as faculty opponent, member of the grading committee, substitute member and chair of the thesis defence?

See Chapter 6.4.2 in the *KTH Guideline on Third Cycle Studies* for the requirements: <https://intra.kth.se/en/styrning/styrdokument/regler/utbildning-1.1117452>

4. Update ISP to the final version

The electronic study plan (ISP) needs to be updated to reflect that all examination goals have been fulfilled at the time for examination. Be particularly careful when addressing the goals in section 9 of the ISP interface. Here, each of the learning outcomes defined by the Higher Education Ordinance should be adequately motivated.

Since this is the final ISP, clear statements must be given, e.g. "I have reached the goal to... [enter the goal], by [for instance] participating in the PhD seminar courses given at the department [state course]". Motivate goal fulfillment by giving as many examples as possible for each goal.

The final ISP will not be approved until satisfactory motivation for goal fulfillment has been given for all goals. The final ISP is approved by the vice FA/FA electronically.

The general study plans and help document with examples of how the examination goals can be concretized are also found via the CBH Canvas sites for [Doctoral students](#) and [Doctoral supervisors](#).

5. Contact the printing office (US-AB)

Make sure to book thesis printing in due time since US-AB is very busy, especially at the end of the semester when many students plan their dissertation defenses.

Web: <http://www.us-ab.com/eng/> ; Email: tryck@us-ab.com

6 WEEKS (no more than 5 weeks) before the dissertation defense (4 tasks)

1. Submit application for thesis defense

The application contains three parts:

1. "Application thesis defense" (form FO-ANDI)
2. The completed and signed summary for the advance review (form FO-SUKV)
3. Approved final ISP (approved by vice FA/FA electronically).

In the "Application Thesis Defence" (FO-ANDI), the names of the opponent, chair, grading committee and substitute committee member are given, as well as time and place for the public defense. The main supervisor also needs to certify that no conflicts of interests exist for the named persons.

Note that the "Subject" in this case is the subject of the third-cycle program and nothing else (i.e. *Biotechnology* or *Theoretical Chemistry and Biology*).

All forms are completed and the originals handed over to the administrator for third-cycle studies.

2. Preparations for the thesis

Graphical profile and layout of thesis:

<https://www.kth.se/en/student/studier/examensarbete/avhandlingarocheexamensarbeten>

Identifiers for the thesis:

- Submit request for **ISBN number**:
<https://www.kth.se/en/biblioteket/publicera-analysera/vagledning-for-publicering/bestallning-av-isbn-1.854778>
- The **TRITA number** is requested from the BIO/TCB administrator for the third-cycle studies.
- The former **ISSN number** is no longer needed.

3. Supervisor review and plagiarism check

The review of both the formalities and the scientific content of the doctoral thesis shall be continuously carried out by designated supervisors.

The summary of the thesis shall be available in English and in Swedish.

The principal supervisor is responsible for conducting a plagiarism control once the thesis (and associated unpublished material) is completed. Any deficiencies must be rectified **before** the thesis is submitted for advance review.

4. Print your thesis

- At least 30 copies must be printed, but it is recommended that **75-100 copies** be printed.
- The printing office takes care of sending the legal deposit (“pliktexemplar”) comprising 7 copies of the printed thesis to Kungliga Biblioteket and the libraries at the main Swedish universities Lund U, Stockholm U, Uppsala U, Linköping U, Gothenburg U and Umeå U.
- The ”spikblad” is no longer required (KTH President’s decision 2018-02-20).

3 WEEKS before the public defense (hard deadline) – ”Spikning” = ”Nailing” (3 tasks)

The doctoral thesis must be available to the public **at least three weeks prior** to the public thesis defense. These three weeks must fall between January 7 – June 15 and August 15 - December 20. This means that three weeks before the thesis defense, the opponent and grading committee should have received the printed thesis. This is important because the quality of review depends on all parties having enough time to go evaluate the thesis contents thoroughly.

This also means that ”nailing” is the most **critical deadline** in the time plan. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a hard end point, that is, postponement of the public defense. To not risk having to postpone the public defense, it is therefore advised that the ”nailing” is performed **no later than at least two days before** this ”3-week-deadline”, but preferably earlier. This is because after uploading, it may take a few days for the thesis meta-data to be reviewed, edited and finally approved in DiVA.

Please note that the version that is published in DiVA (the thesis “kappa”) does not contain the full content of the printed thesis and published papers and manuscripts are not always available through DiVA for copyright reasons. It is thus essential that the opponent and grading committee receive the printed thesis as stated above.

Step-by-step checklist for posting (“nailing”) at KTH homepage:

<https://www.kth.se/en/biblioteket/publicera-analysera/hantera-publicationer/spikningen-steg-for-steg-1.854783>

The ”nailing” checklist, additional comments:

1. Uploading the thesis in DiVA. Before uploading, make sure to have the following at hand:

- a) The two digital files from the print office: one pdf for electronic publishing in DiVA (“kappa”) and one pdf for electronic archiving (full text)
- b) The abstract text in English and Swedish
- c) Keywords
- d) Your KTH-ID

Now, you are ready to upload the files in the DiVA database:

Log into DiVA: <https://kth.diva-portal.org/dream/login.jsf>

- Choose “Add publication / Upload files”
- Choose the correct publication type, normally “Doctoral thesis, comprehensive summary” (this is the kappa of your thesis). You first have to register the individual papers of your thesis in DiVA (unless you have done it before). Click continue.
- Register the requested information about your thesis.
- Add name and year of birth.
- Add ORCID (if you have one).
- Add your KTH-ID in the field “Local User Id”.
- Add your organization and email.
- Add title, language, and year.
- Add publisher

- Add “National subject category”, for instance “Natural Sciences”
- Add “Research subject”, should be either “Biotechnology” or “Theoretical Chemistry and Biology”
- Add keywords
- Add the abstract in English and Swedish
- Add supervisor
- Add opponent
- Add information about public defense
- Choose “Degree”
- Click continue and upload
- Approve conditions for electronic publishing.
- Review the information and make sure everything is correct.
- Check the fulltext file by clicking on “fulltext” to make sure it is possible to open it.
- Submit.
- Once the post has been processed and approved by KTH it will appear in DiVA. This, i.e. making your licentiate thesis publicly available, is the first part of the formal “nailing”. (The second is providing a hard copy to the library.)
- Sign the form [Media_agreement.pdf](https://www.kth.se/polopoly_fs/1.586913!/Media_agreement.pdf) and give to the KTH Library when handing in your thesis.

2. Visit KTHB (campus library) and hand over one copy of the printed thesis.

3. Complete distribution list (FO-DIDO).

Here, you list all people and organizations that you will send the printed thesis to (give name and affiliation/address). The document should be signed by the doctoral student and vice FA.

Once the “spikning” is confirmed, the local administrator for third-cycle studies issues and announces the formal decision for thesis defense “*Beslut – Disputation*” (form FO-BEDI) and the event is added to the online KTH calendar.

1 WEEK before the public defense

The local administrator for third-cycle studies emails the draft minutes (“*Minutes of the Grading Committee for Grading of Doctoral Thesis*”, form FO-PROT) to the chair and main supervisor to be handed over to the grading committee at the meeting following the public defense.

0 WEEKS – Day of the public defense act

Local guidelines regarding the procedure for the public thesis defense

The thesis defense is open to the public. The parties at a thesis defense include the opponent, the respondent, the members of the grading committee, the chair of the thesis defense, and normally the supervisors, as well as the general public and colleagues in the audience. There are no strictly defined rules regarding the form of the act, but it typically follows the scheme below.

1. The chair opens the defense by welcoming everyone present and gives a brief introduction of the respondent, opponent and grading committee. This introduction varies in content and length.
2. The chair informs the auditorium of the procedure of the public thesis defense, and informs the audience that they will be given the opportunity to ask questions after the questioning by opponent and grading committee.
3. The chair gives the respondent the opportunity to comment on possible errors in the thesis (errata list).

4. If previously agreed upon, the chair now invites the opponent to give a brief introduction to the field of the thesis.
5. After the opponent's introduction (if applicable), the respondent presents the thesis succinctly, including an introduction, the questions at issue, achieved results, and the scientific and societal interest of the results, and relevant conclusions (typically no more than 30 min).
6. Following the student's presentation, the opponent and respondent engage in a discussion about the thesis, which typically lasts for about 1-1.5 hours. The grading committee and audience are not allowed to ask questions during this part of the thesis defense.
7. When the opponent has ended the discussion with the respondent, the chair invites the members of the grading committee to ask questions to the respondent. The grading committee is the decision-making authority, not the opponent. The task of the committee is to evaluate how well the respondent addresses the opponent's questions and engages in the discussion, and to ask additional questions on those parts that need further clarification.
8. When there are no more questions or comments from the grading committee, the audience is invited to ask questions and make comments. At this stage, everyone is free to participate in the discussion.
9. The chair closes the thesis defense by thanking the opponent and respondent on behalf of KTH. The completed thesis defense act normally lasts for 2-3 hours.
10. The grading committee convenes immediately after the defense act. The standard procedure for the committee meeting is as follows:
 - The committee members first elect a coordinator among them, and then give the word to this coordinator.
 - The opponent and the principal supervisor (among others) must be available at the meeting of the grading committee. The grading committee determines which of these parties have the right to attend and to speak at the meeting.
 - The coordinator first addresses the opponent who is asked to give his/her oral opinion of the thesis and the discussion.
 - If requested by the coordinator, the main supervisor is given the opportunity to describe the development of the respondent towards becoming an independent researcher, and to clarify the respondent's scientific contribution to the papers/manuscripts of the thesis, including the writing process.
 - The coordinator addresses the other committee members to collect their opinions. Note that if, at any time and for any reason, the committee prefers to confer in private, the coordinator can ask the opponent and supervisor(s) to leave the room.
 - All committee members state individually their recommendation whether to award the thesis the grade Pass or Fail. When it comes to this decision, the opinion of the majority shall apply. In the event of a tie, the chairperson's opinion shall determine the grade. Anyone who disagrees with the final decision may make her/his reservations known by submitting a note of dissenting opinion. This dissenting opinion shall be reported in the form of a separate document appended to the protocol. All those who do not report a dissenting opinion are considered to be in support of the decision. Whosoever contributes in the final processing of the thesis defense without taking part in the decision has the right to have her/his dissenting opinion recorded.
 - The meeting of the grading committee and its decision shall be documented in a protocol, which shall be immediately adjusted by all members of the grading committee. By this, the meeting is closed. The protocol shall be promptly handed over to the third-cycle administrator.
11. After the meeting, the coordinator of the grading committee announces the decision in person to the respondent.

What happens after a successful thesis defense?

Provided that you have completed the course curriculum, it is now time to apply for doctoral degree.

This step is performed electronically when you are logged in at kth.se, under "My account / Services / Certificates / Degree certificate. When this is done, send an email informing the local third-cycle studies administrator so that he/she can proceed with the application.

Contact

Christina Divne, vice FA for the doctoral programs BIO and TCB (divne@kth.se)

Kristina Jansson, local administrator of third-cycle studies for the programs BIO and TCB
(phdadmin@cbh.kth.se)

All decisions related to the dissertation as outlined in this document are taken by vice FA (by delegation from FA) or FA.