



PhD DISSERTATION AND FINAL EXAMINATION

This document summarizes the main procedures and deadlines for the final examination of NASP PhD students. The source of the information gathered here is the Regulations of doctorates of the University of Milan (Art. 23), which can be downloaded at <http://www.unimi.it/ateneo/normativa/18924.htm#c90686>

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PHASE 1

Submission of the final dissertation to the PhD Faculty Board and selection of referees

1a. SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS TO THE PHD FACULTY BOARD

- All students are required to submit their final dissertation to the Faculty Board of the doctoral program **by the end of the third (last) year** of the program, **within 15 days before the end of the program.**
 - 29th cohort: between 15 and 31 December 2016
 - 30th cohort: between 16 and 31 October 2017
 - 31st cohort: between 15 and 30 September 2018
 - 32nd cohort: between 15 and 30 September 2019
- **EXCEPTIONS** for:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION
 - ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)
- In these cases the deadline is postponed for a period equal to that of prorogation, suspension or replacement.
 - E.g. If a student of the 30th cohort replaced an other student that withdrew the doctoral program, and enrolled on January 1, 2015 rather than on November 1, 2014, she should deliver her thesis between 15 and 30 December 2017 rather than between 16 and 31 October 2017.

NB. SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS BY CANDIDATES

- The thesis **MUST NOT be uploaded** on any Unimi digital platform.
- It must be **sent by e-mail to the Director** of the PhD Program within the deadlines specified above.
- Students has to attach also:
 - ❖ an **abstract** in Italian and in English;
 - ❖ a **report** reviewing the training and research activities they carried out throughout the three years of the doctoral program, which may include research work, academic performance, list of publications in preparation or already published, participation to summer schools and conferences, talks given.

1b. SELECTION OF REFEREES (EXTERNAL EXAMINERS) BY THE FACULTY BOARD

- The Faculty Board of the PhD Program selects two referees (external examiners), independent from the universities that contribute to issuing the doctoral degree, **by the end of the third (last) year of the program, within 15 days before the end of the program.**
 - 29th cohort: between 15 and 31 December 2016
 - 30th cohort: between 16 and 31 October 2017
 - 31st cohort: between 15 and 30 September 2018
 - 32nd cohort: between 15 and 30 September 2019
- **EXCEPTIONS** for:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION
 - ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)
- In these cases the deadline is postponed for a period equal to that of prorogation, suspension or replacement.

PHASE 2

Submission of the final dissertation to external referees and appointment of the Defense Committee by the Faculty Board

2a. The Faculty Board submits the thesis to two external referees

- **WITHIN 30 DAYS** after the candidate has submitted her thesis:
 - 29th cohort: submission by 30 January 2017
 - 30th cohort: submission by 30 November 2017
 - 31st cohort: submission by 30 October 2018
 - 32nd cohort: submission by 30 October 2019
- The Faculty Board* sends the thesis to the external referees **accompanied by an evaluation report** of the candidate's research activities.
 - * For POLS and ESLS de facto, the candidate or the candidate's SUPERVISOR sends the thesis .
- These deadlines may change only when one of the following cases occurs:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION
 - ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)

2b. Proposal for the appointment of the Defense Committee

- **Within 30 days** after the student has submitted her thesis, the Faculty Board proposes the **composition of the Defense Committee** to Unimi central offices. The Rector, finally, appoints the Committee's members.

PHASE 3

Referees' evaluation and application for
the admission to oral defense

3a. Review of the dissertation

- The two external examiners have to review the dissertation and write an analytic report **within 30 days** after receiving it:
 - 29th cohort: by 1 March 2017
 - 30th cohort: by 29 December 2017
 - 31st cohort: by 28 November 2018
 - 32nd cohort: by 28 November 2019

NB. These dates are tentative
- These deadlines may change only when one of the following cases occurs:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION
 - ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)

3a. Review of the dissertation

- ❖ The referees can recommend the dissertation to be admitted to oral defense, or they can recommend to revise it – correcting or integrating it - and to postpone the defense **up to six months** at most. Anyway, after this period, the dissertation is admitted to public defense accompanied by a new review.
- ❖ Examiners are asked to provide a detailed evaluation of the quality of the thesis. They are also asked to provide guidance for revision.
- ❖ Candidates may be required to make corrections and amendments to their thesis. These can be minor cosmetic changes, but candidates may be also required to substantially revise and resubmit the thesis.
- ❖ Each examiner recommends to the candidate the needed corrections and suggests a timeframe for completing them.

3b. Deadlines for deciding the date of the oral defense

- The **Faculty Board** decides the **date** of the **oral defense WITHIN 15 DAYS** after receiving the external referees' evaluation report, and communicates it to the candidate and to Unimi central offices:
 - 29th cohort: by 15 March 2017
 - 30th cohort: by 11 January 2018
 - 31st cohort: by 12 December 2018
 - 32nd cohort: by 12 December 2019

NB. These dates are tentative
- These deadlines may change only when one of the following cases occurs:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION
 - ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)

3c. Date of final defense

- The oral defense should usually take place **60 days** after the external examiners have sent their report to candidates and their supervisors*:
 - 29th cohort: by 30 April 2017
 - 30th cohort: by 28 February 2018
 - 31st cohort: by 28 January 2019
 - 32nd cohort: by 28 January 2020

***Note: these dates should be considered as tentative. The exact date depends also on the availability of the members of the defense committee.**

- These deadlines may change when one of the following cases occurs:
 - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE 29th COHORT)
 - ❖ SUSPENSION; LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)
 - ❖ THE EXTERNAL REFEREES HAVE ASKED FOR A REVISION OF THE THESIS (WITHIN 6 MONTHS AT MOST)

3d. If referees ask for revisions

- The above mentioned deadlines are postponed for a period equal to the number of months suggested by the referees necessary for revisions.
- Revisions must be completed **within 6 months at most** from the date in which candidates have received the referees' review. The above mentioned deadlines, in this case, are to be intended starting from the end of the sixth month recommended for revisions.

3e. If referees express contrasting evaluations....

- ...the Faculty Board settles the dispute.

3f. When the Faculty Board authorizes

...students have

- to **send a copy of the thesis** (by e-mail and, if they wish, by air mail) **to** the members of the **Defense Committee**;
- to **apply for the admission to the final examination**.

NB. The deadlines for the application may vary according to each single case (whether the thesis is submitted within the “normal” deadlines or after because of a postponement in the submission).

Unimi provides the **official deadlines** on its website:

<http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm>.

Please, check carefully this link.

For information contact the **PhD Students Desk** at the Students Administration Office (via S. Sofia 9/1)

- through the online service: [Infostudenti - Students information Service](#).
- by phone (in Italy: 199 188 128, from abroad: 0039 056676357)
- or register for an appointment (**opening hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 1 to 3 pm**)

3f. Application for the admission to the oral defense

The application is made **online only**, through the designated [SIFA - Online Services](#) following the instructions below:

- 1) authenticate by clicking on LOGIN
- 2) select Students administrative services>Degree programme final exam>Dissertation defense (PhD)
- 3) choose the item "Admission"
- 4) Pay the **diploma fee of 116 Euro** (including the 16-Euro revenue stamp) with one of the following methods:
 - a) credit card of the Visa or MasterCard circuit, during the online admission application procedure
 - b) MAV payment slip produced at the end of the application and available at the link [SIFA - Online Services](#) Payments, Tuition fees and Exemptions>Payment services (the expiration date is on the MAV payment slip)

Nothing must be submitted to the Ph.D. Students Office

More info is available on <http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm>

3g. Uploading theses on AIR – institutional repository

Before sitting the examination it is compulsory to:

1) **upload the thesis on AIR** (<https://air.unimi.it/>), login in with own credentials (login box on top right)

2) submit the **declarative statement** for the self-archiving of the Ph.D. thesis that is printed at the end of the uploading procedure, to the following **mailbox**: declaratorie.dottorato@unimi.it.

The signed declarative statement must be accompanied by an identity document.

PHASE 4

THE VIVA

4. The oral defense

- ❖ During the oral examination the candidate is expected to defend her thesis by elaborating on her arguments; by explaining how her thesis is set in a wider disciplinary context; by discussing the implications of her work. The oral defense is an integral part of the examination process.
- ❖ The duration of the defense may vary. However, usually it lasts 2* to 2 and a half hours at most.
 - * For SOMET 1 to 2,5 hours
- ❖ There are no formal rules as to how the examination should be carried out. Usually, the examiners meet some minutes before the beginning of the defense in order to establish how to organize the session.

4. The oral defense

Usually, oral examinations take place as follows:

- ❖ After the chair of the committee welcomes and introduces all presents, the candidate has an opportunity to address the examiners for 30 to 40 minutes* without interruption.

* For SOMET students, 25 minutes.

- ❖ The examiners question the candidate on her thesis and engage her in discussion about her research.
- ❖ The chair may invite the candidate to make a closing statement.
- ❖ At the end of the defense, the chair asks the candidate and any support persons or observers to leave the room.

4. The oral defense

- ❖ The examiners discuss the candidate thesis and agree on what recommendation to make to the Rector of the University of Milan.
- ❖ The chair then recalls the candidate to the room, and the candidate is advised of the examination committee's recommendation.
- ❖ The committee can recommend, by unanimity vote, that the thesis is awarded of honors if it provides particularly important scientific results.
- ❖ The committee writes a report of the examination using a very simple form, which is usually provided in advance to the chair of the committee.

SUMMARY OF MAIN DEADLINES

	29th cohort	30th cohort	31st cohort	32nd cohort
Students' submission of thesis to the Faculty Board and selection of referees	15-30 December 2016	16-31 October 2017	15-30 September 2018	15-30 September 2019
Submission of thesis to referees	By 30 January 2017	By 30 November 2017	By 30 October 2018	By 30 October 2019
Documents to be sent to referees with the thesis	1) An abstract of the thesis in Italian and English; 2) a report of training and research activities	1) An abstract of the thesis in Italian and English; 2) a report of training and research activities	1) An abstract of the thesis in Italian and English; 2) a report of training and research activities	1) An abstract of the thesis in Italian and English; 2) a report of training and research activities
Dissertation review by referees (tentative)	By 1 March 2017	By 29 December 2017	By 28 November 2018	By 28 November 2019
Decision on the date for final defense by the Faculty Board (tentative)	By 15 March 2017	By 11 January 2018	By 12 December 2018	By 12 December 2019
Submission of thesis to the Defense Committee	After the approval of the Faculty Board	After the approval of the Faculty Board	After the approval of the Faculty Board	After the approval of the Faculty Board
Application for the admission to oral defense (students can apply only after the approval of the Faculty Board)	For official deadlines check on Unimi web site http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm	For official deadlines check on Unimi web site http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm	For official deadlines check on Unimi web site http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm	For official deadlines check on Unimi web site http://www.unimi.it/ENG/research/92587.htm
Uploading of the thesis on AIR (https://air.unimi.it/) and submission of the declarative statement	Before setting the defense	Before setting the defense	Before setting the defense	Before setting the defense
Date of final defense (tentative)	By 30 April 2017	By 28 Febbraio 2018	By 28 January 2019	By 28 January 2020