



# 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. 27), which can be downloaded at [Regolamento d'Ateneo in materia di dottorati di ricerca | Università degli Studi di Milano Statale \(unimi.it\)](#), and the [webpage](#) of the University of Milan dedicated to the final exam.

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# PHASE 1

Submission of the final dissertation to the PhD Faculty Board, selection of referees and application for the admission to oral defense

# 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, **between 15 and 30 September**.
- **EXCEPTIONS** for:
  - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY ACCORDING THE RULES PROVIDED BY UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE – ART. 27, CC. 8-10)
  - ❖ SUSPENSION (ART. 26, CC. 10-14 OF UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE)
  - ❖ 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.

# NB. SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS BY CANDIDATES

- At this stage, 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 external reviewers after the delivery of the thesis, by the end of October.**
  
- **EXCEPTIONS** for:
  - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY ACCORDING THE RULES PROVIDED BY UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE – ART. 27, CC. 8-10)
  - ❖ SUSPENSION (ART. 26, CC. 10-14 OF UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE)
  - ❖ 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.

# 1c. After submitting the thesis and when the Faculty Board authorizes....

...students have

- 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:

<https://www.unimi.it/en/study/postgraduate-study/doctoral-research-phd-programmes/completing-your-doctoral-studies>

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.](#)
- or register for an appointment (**opening hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 1 to 3 pm**)

# 1d. Application for the admission to the oral defense

The application is made **online only**, through the designated [Unimia service](#) following the instructions below:

- 1) authenticate with your Unimi email credentials
- 2) select "Admission" in the field "type of application"
- 4) **Pay the diploma fee of 116 Euro** (including the 16-Euro revenue stamp) with PAGO PA

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

More info is available on

<https://www.unimi.it/en/study/postgraduate-study/doctoral-research-phd-programmes/completing-your-doctoral-studies>



## 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 around 30 days** after the candidate has submitted her thesis.
- The Faculty Board\* sends the thesis to the external referees **accompanied by an evaluation report** of the candidate's research activities.

\* For **POLS** the candidate sends the thesis **by copying the supervisor and the Programme director and vice-director CC** to the external referees **accompanied by an evaluation report** of the candidate's research activities. Further instructions will be provided by the PhD Director.

- These deadline may change only when one of the following cases occurs:
  - ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY ACCORDING THE RULES PROVIDED BY UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE – ART. 27, CC. 8-10)
  - ❖ SUSPENSION (ART. 26, CC. 10-14 OF UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE)
  - ❖ 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

## 3a. Review of the dissertation

- **The two external examiners review the dissertation and write an analytic assessment within 30 days after receiving it**

# 3a. Review of the dissertation

- ❖ **The referees recommend the dissertation to be admitted to oral defense.**
- ❖ **As an alternative, they can recommend corrections and amendments by allowing up to six months for the revision. After this period, the dissertation is admitted to public defense accompanied by a new review.**
- ❖ Examiners are asked to provide a detailed assessment 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 around 15 days after receiving the external referees' evaluation report**, and communicates it to the candidate and to Unimi central offices.

## 3c. Date of final defense

**The oral defense should usually take place within 60 days after the external reviewers have sent their report to candidates and their supervisors.**

**The exact date of VIVA depends on the assessment of the external reviewers and on the availability of the members of the defense committee.**

A deferral of normal deadlines may occur when one of the following cases occurs:

- ❖ PROROGATION (EXCLUSIVELY ACCORDING THE RULES PROVIDED BY UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE – ART. 27, CC. 8-10)
- ❖ SUSPENSION (ART. 26, CC. 10-14 OF UNIMI REGULATION OF DOCTORATE)
- ❖ LATE ENROLLMENT (AFTER MORE THAN ONE MONTH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM)



## 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** after candidates have received the referees' review. The above mentioned deadlines, in this case, are to be intended starting from the end of the sixth months 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**

# 3g. Uploading theses on AIR – institutional repository

**Before sitting the examination** it is mandatory to:

- 1) **upload the thesis on AIR** (<https://air.unimi.it/>), logging 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](mailto:declaratorie.dottorato@unimi.it).

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

- 3) Complete the AlmaLaurea questionnaire, accessing [UNIMIA](#) > Jobs and Traineeships
- 4) Complete the ANVUR questionnaire (instructions available on the Unimi webpage).

# 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.
- ❖ 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.