

Further guidelines on the UNIGE thesis procedures

The current document serves to complement the LNDS rules 2022 as published on the LNDS website.

Thesis format

Consult the Thesis Formatting Section (below) to properly organize and format the thesis document.

Pick your jury and prepare the private defense

The jury composition is at least partially the same as the TAC indicated for your intermediate evaluation.

Please check with the LNDS coordinator in case of changes.

Private defense: No later than 3 weeks before the scheduled private defense date, the PhD candidate submits the thesis manuscript to the TAC. In the session, the TAC makes an assessment of the quality of the PhD candidate's personal contribution to the presented work as well as his/her knowledge. The possible evaluation outcomes are "sufficient" or "insufficient". In case of failure ("insufficient"), the candidate may organize a second private defense. The TAC may also suggest modifications to the thesis manuscript. Any changes must be completed before the public defense of the thesis. The private defense is held at least 6 weeks before the public defense.

The session (1-2 hours) includes the following steps:

- 20-40 minutes of oral presentation by the PhD student
- 2 rounds of questions from the experts
- Questions from the president
- Deliberation by the jury

The grade is given based on the written introduction, the presentation, and the knowledge on the literature. The form ("proces verbal" or "PV") that needs to be filled out after the exam is available on the [LNDS website](#). All members of the committee must sign after the exam. The student or the thesis director has to send the report to the LNDS coordinator.

Note: In contrast to the public defense, this private defense with the TAC could for example focus more on the technical aspects of your work and your background knowledge on the project and its embedding in the neuroscience landscape. The public defense and presentation could then be more accessible to the public, and allow for more general questions and perspectives ... to be discussed with your thesis jury ...

Public Defense

No later than 6 weeks before the scheduled public defense date, the PhD candidate submits a proposal for the composition of the thesis jury.

No later than 5 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the PhD candidate submits his/her thesis manuscript to the director and, if applicable, to the co-director of the thesis and to the other members of the thesis jury for assessment.

No later than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the PhD candidate registers for the thesis defense at his/her faculty, providing the following information:

- date, time and place of the public defense
- an electronic copy of the thesis manuscript
- the exam protocol of the private defense
- the composition of the thesis jury, including the professional address of each member and his/her function
- a summary of the ECTS credits obtained in the doctoral program.

Please put the LNDS coordinator in copy to receive your LNDS thesis number (to be put on the thesis title page), and as to add documents like the report on your private defense and your LNDS credits for the preparations of the public defense that you are doing with your faculty of enrollment.

Faculty contacts:

- [Medicine](#)
- [Sciences](#)
- [FPSE](#)

No later than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the [thesis director must send the thesis report\(s\)](#) to the Dean of the Faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate. The report must have been approved and signed by all members of the jury and conclude that the thesis can be defended to the thesis jury. Any modifications to the thesis manuscript that are proposed by the jury must be completed before the defense.

For the public defense, the student is asked to give a presentation that is accessible to the public and lasts ~30min and then respond to questions from the jury, the thesis director(s) and the public. The defense is being evaluated by the jury, which assesses the PhD candidate's scientific research, as well as the quality of the manuscript and of the oral presentation. The possible evaluation outcomes are "accepted" or "refused" in the Faculties of Medicine and Science, or are expressed by an average mark between 0 and 6 in the Faculty of Psychology and Education. The outcome "accepted" or a mark equal to or higher than 4 is necessary for the successful completion of the doctoral exam.

[Faculty of Medicine or Sciences: Template for public defense report](#). Must be filled and signed by all jury members. Please send the original to the secretariat of your faculty after the exam (and a scan to the LNDS coordinator). Jury signatures must be original, no copies are accepted (Note: Scanned documents accepted until further notice!)

[FPSE: Template for public defense report.](#) Must be filled and signed by all jury members. Please send the original to the secretariat of your faculty after the exam (and a scan to the LNDS coordinator). Jury signatures must be original, no copies are accepted (Note: Scanned documents accepted until further notice!)

The PhD candidate will then get the “imprimatur” page from the dean of his/her faculty of enrollment. This page is to be included into the final thesis version. Upon sending the report of the public defense, this imprimatur page (and more information about thesis submission to the UNIGE library and how to order your PhD diploma) will be sent by your faculty of enrollment.

Thesis Formatting

A. General points

- The thesis needs to be printed in A4 format. With the dean’s authorization, the thesis can exceptionally be printed in a different format.
- The [thesis front page](#) must be the one provided on the LNDS website.
- The legal names need to be printed first. Married candidates must show their maiden name if they are registered at the University under that name.
- The country of origin is printed under the family name. Swiss citizens must provide the city of origin, with the name of the “canton” in brackets.
- The final version of the thesis needs to show the thesis number, provided by the LNDS coordinator, under the place of origin. This number will be provided after a successful oral exam and after scheduling the date for the public defense. In a preliminary title page (i.e. produced before the number has been provided) “XXX” replaces the thesis number.
- The place where the thesis was published, the name of the editor (optional), and the year of publication are indicated at the bottom of the front page.
- The “imprimatur” page provided by the dean of your faculty should be inserted after the title page (A scan is allowed)
- If the thesis consists of published articles, the references for these publications have to be mentioned on a separate page, immediately after the imprimatur page.
- The text shown in the title page and the imprimatur must be written in French. If the thesis is written in English, a two-page summary in French has to be included.

Please find more information here: <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/>

B. How to organize a thesis with published articles

To write your thesis with articles you need to have scientific article(s) published, accepted for publication or at least accepted for review, in peer-reviewed journals. Only if your contribution is significant, the article will be considered as part of your thesis. The advantage of a thesis written with articles is that the chapters of the results section can be replaced by articles. For each paper, please do indicate in detail (in the thesis manuscript) what was YOUR EXACT contribution to the work.

A thesis with articles should be structured as follows:

- Official title page with logo of your faculty of enrollment, to [download from the LNDS website](#)
- Imprimatur page (attributed by the thesis jury)
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract (in English & French)
- (a general) Introduction (~ 10-20 pages suggested, tbd with thesis director)
- Brief summary of the results, indicating precisely your contribution to each article
- (a general) Discussion (~ 10-20 pages suggested, tbd with thesis director)
- References
- Annex section with pdf of articles as produced during submission process

C. How to organize a thesis without published articles

The advantage here (for some) might be that you can write the thesis in French and without having articles published or accepted. Please note that if you do not (yet) have peer-reviewed publications, the jury members will base their opinion much more on the knowledge you expose in your general Introduction and Discussion papers as well as when you write these sections as “envelope” for already peer-reviewed and published papers ...

This type of thesis should be structured as follows:

- Official title page with logo of your faculty of enrollment, to [download from the LNDS website](#)
- Imprimatur page (attributed by the thesis jury)
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract (in English & French)
- List of Abbreviations
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Introduction (extensive and detailed; content tbd with thesis director)
- Materials and Methods
- Results
- Discussion (extensive and detailed; content tbd with thesis director)
- References

Please **keep in mind the following points** when writing a thesis with or without articles:

- Please download the **thesis official title page** [from the LNDS website](#).
- The Imprimatur page immediately needs to follow the title page in the final thesis version. This can be done by scanning the original Imprimatur page and inserting it into the thesis document (please do not use a jpg-photo, the quality is not sufficient).
- A good introduction should show that you have acquired a broad knowledge of the previous and ongoing research in your field, do not forget appropriate referencing (and avoid auto-plagiarism if you have published papers on the topic already)
- A good discussion should express critical thinking concerning what the student has learned:
 - Discussing your results considering other findings, making an overall analysis of the publications reviewed.
 - Analyzing the quality and limitations of the results.
 - Formulating conclusions.
 - Making the point about future perspectives.