

Further guidelines on the UNIL thesis procedures

The current document serves to complement the LNDS rules 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.

For FBM students

Email all jury members to coordinate a date for the private thesis defense. Once the date is fixed, reserve a room on campus to hold the private defense. The composition of the jury, as well as the date and location of the exam have to be announced to the LNDS coordinator and to the FBM Thesis Office (phdthesis@unil.ch) at least **5 weeks prior to the private thesis defense** (together with the other documents necessary, [please see point 5 here](#)). Hybrid exams are possible under certain conditions, [please check here](#) and contact the LNDS coordinator.

The LNDS coordinator will add your credit recap to the documents that need to be sent to the FBM Thesis Office, and your LNDS thesis number. [Please see the checklist here](#).

The Doctoral School will send an e-mail to the jury members and the thesis director(s), with copy to the PhD candidate, asking them to send their report to the Doctoral School at least one week before the private defense. On this report, they will evaluate the format and contents of the thesis and indicate whether they consider the thesis eligible to be defended. After receiving these reports, the Doctoral School will send them to the president of the thesis jury.

Please note that after receiving the thesis, the Doctoral School will send the **exam's registration bill** (500 CHF) to the student's private address. This bill must be paid **30 days before the public exam**.

For SSP students

Email all jury members to coordinate a date for the private thesis defense. Once the date is fixed, reserve a room on campus to hold the private defense.

The composition of your thesis jury also needs to be announced to the “Secretariat des postgrades” (Géopolis 2612, UNIL-Dorigny, 1015 Lausanne) **at least 3 months before the planned date of your private defense (colloque de thèse)** since the jury composition will need to be approved by the faculty council. Please also see the « [Procédure à l’attention des doctorants](#) » for additional information. The LNDS coordinator will add your credit recap to the documents that need to be sent to the FBM Thesis Office, and also your LNDS thesis number.

One of your jury members should be designated as rapporteur for the Lemanic Neuroscience Doctoral School (i.e. informing the LNDS coordinator on the jury composition, defense dates and outcomes).

In the private defense ...

... the candidate’s general knowledge in Neurosciences will be evaluated, as well as the specific knowledge in the field of the thesis.

FBM students

The defense (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 jury assigns a grade to the thesis manuscript, the quality of the candidate’s personal work, as well as the quality of his/her presentation and knowledge. This evaluation is expressed by three marks between 0 and 6. Each of the three scores must be equal to or greater than 4 to pass the private defense.

When the student has successfully passed the private defense, the jury (at least including the jury president and the thesis director) and the student fix a date for the public thesis defense. The public defense should take place **minimum 3 weeks after the private defense**. Once the date is agreed upon, the student needs to reserve an auditorium to hold the public defense and announce the location, date and time to the FBM Thesis Office (phdthesis@unil.ch).

If the jury requires corrections to the thesis by the student, the document filled during the private defense (the “procès verbal” or “PV”) should specify the person responsible for checking the corrections. This person has to receive the corrected manuscript BEFORE the public defense and announce to the FBM Thesis Office (phdthesis@unil.ch) in time that he/she agree with the new version of the thesis.

SSP students

Please refer to the « [Procédure à l’attention des doctorants](#) » for detailed information.

The defense (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 thesis jury may:

- accept the manuscript
- accept the manuscript with some reworking
- refuse the manuscript as is and schedule a second thesis colloquium within 6 months
- reject the thesis.

Note that after the « colloque de thèse », an **exam registration bill** (500 CHF) needs to be paid. Details are to be obtained from the “Secretariat des postgrades” (Géopolis 2612, UNIL-Dorigny, 1015 Lausanne). After the « colloque de thèse », potential modifications asked for by the jury need to be implemented in the thesis document. Two versions of the corrected thesis need to be sent to the thesis director who will then communicate his decision on thesis eligibility to the deanship. In succession, the student is provided the “imprimatur” page (signature page) that needs to be included into the final and printed version of the thesis. The final printed version of the thesis needs to be sent to the “Secretariat des postgrades” at least 3 weeks before the public defense (soutenance).

The date for the **public defense (soutenance) can be fixed minimally 2 months after the « colloque de thèse »**. Three dates need to be proposed to the faculty as this final (public) thesis defense will be presided by the dean or the vice-dean of the faculty.

Public Defense

Upon successful completion of the private defense, the thesis director (at the FBM) or the Dean’s Office (at the SSP) sets the date and place of the public defense in agreement with the thesis jury and the PhD candidate. The public thesis defense takes place at least 3 weeks and at most 6 months after the private defense session. The thesis jury decides whether the thesis defense was successful.

Following the public defense, the thesis must be submitted to the [university library](#) and your PhD degree must be ordered by filling the template in [MyUNIL](#). The imprimatur page must be included in the final thesis manuscript and the LNDS thesis number must be stated on the thesis title page. The LNDS coordinator is very happy to receive a pdf of your final thesis manuscript for the LNDS archive!

Thesis formatting

A. General points

Some general advice from the "[Prescriptions pour l'impression et le dépôt des thèses de doctorat de l'Université de Lausanne](#)":

- A4 format, 29.7 x 21 cm
- Double-sided printing
- Paper 80 gr/m²
- 40 lines/page maximum
- 15 mm external margin minimum
- Clean presentation of text, pictures and tables, without corrections
- Front cover in cardstock (130 - 180 gr/m²)
- Official title page, [available here](#) (will be the first page of the document as well as the front cover of the thesis)
- The "imprimatur" page immediately follows the title page (attributed by the thesis jury)
- Please note that the binding of the document cannot be done with rings or plastic

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 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.