

Guidelines for the Aptitude Colloquium (ApC)

This document summarizes the information given in the ETH Zurich Ordinance on the Doctorate and the D-BSSE Detailed Stipulations: <https://bsse.ethz.ch/doctorate/ordinance-and-stipulations.html>

1. Composition of the Aptitude Committee

- The chairperson (a member of the doctoral committee)
- The doctoral thesis supervisor
- The second / further advisor(s)

The doctoral committee of D-BSSE may add further persons to the ApC in individual cases or in general.

2. Aptitude Colloquium Procedure

The ApC consists of:

1. A 30 minute presentation by the candidate on the planned research project and
2. A 30 minute oral examination.
3. Deliberation of the aptitude committee and the announcement of the decision to the candidate

The physical presence of the aptitude committee as well as of the candidate at the aptitude colloquium is not mandatory. Alternatively, the participants can be connected via video conference. In this case, two-way communication in video and audio must be guaranteed for the entire duration of the examination. The chairperson and the persons connected are responsible for the functioning of the video link. If two-way communication via video or audio is not or is no longer possible, it is the duty of the chairperson to interrupt the colloquium and to organise a date to resume it. The chairperson decides whether to restart the colloquium from the beginning, or whether it can be resumed at the point of interruption. The doctoral student is responsible to send the link for the video conference.

3. Tasks of the Aptitude Committee

The aptitude committee examines the candidate's suitability to independently conduct a research project and to write a doctoral thesis. The subject of the examination is the research project described in the doctoral plan.

The committee may provide recommendations on other sections of the doctoral plan:

- b) teaching tasks,
- c) any other duties, such as monitoring of equipment or organisational tasks for the research group,
- d) a timeline for extended doctoral studies, if applicable.

The committee evaluates the performance of the applicant as "passed" or "failed", announces the decision to the candidate right after the colloquium and informs the candidate in writing if changes to the doctoral plan are required. The chairperson provides the result to the D-BSSE Doctoral Administration in writing within one day of the colloquium, together with any additional comments on the doctoral plan.

4. Result of the Aptitude Colloquium

If the result of the evaluation is not unanimous, the doctoral committee of D-BSSE will decide the matter within one month of the ApC. The doctoral committee will take its decision by focusing on the research objectives described in the doctoral plan and the result of the evaluation; it may also call in the aptitude committee and the candidate to obtain further information.

An examination which concluded with a "failed" result may be repeated once, provided that the doctoral thesis supervisor agrees. The doctoral thesis supervisor may only refuse a repetition if the aptitude committee unanimously assessed the first attempt as "failed". An examination which concluded with a "failed" result may be repeated under the following conditions:

- 1) The "fail" decision was not taken unanimously, or
- 2) The "fail" decision was taken unanimously, and the doctoral thesis supervisor agrees to the repetition.

Any repetition must take place within three months of the first definitive result.