

Aptitude colloquium at D-GESS - Info sheet

Where to find information about the aptitude colloquium?

This info sheet is based on the general regulations as outlined in

- the [Ordinance on the Doctorate at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich](#)
- the [Rector's Implementation Provisions for the ETH Zurich Ordinance on the Doctorate](#)
- department-specific detailed regulations, see [here](#)

Further information concerning Aptitude Colloquium can be found here

- Website "[D-GESS Doctoral Studies](#)"
- Website "[ETH Doctoral Administration](#)"

What is the goal of the aptitude colloquium?

The goal of the aptitude colloquium is to assess if the doctoral candidate is qualified for definitive admission to the ETH doctorate.

Who are the members of the aptitude committee?

The aptitude colloquium consists of the following committee members:

- a. The chairperson. He or she must be a member of the Professors' Conference of D-GESS of any department of the ETH Zürich. He or she cannot be actively involved in the supervision of the doctoral thesis. As some specialist knowledge of the subject matter is required, it is advisable to choose a professor from the field to which the doctoral thesis pertains.
- b. The doctoral thesis supervisor
- c. The second supervisor

At request of the supervisor and the doctoral candidate, the doctoral committee can approve further persons to the aptitude committee.

What is the task of the aptitude committee?

The role of the aptitude committee is to make sure that the candidate is on the right track with his and her research project and to give feedback on the project (e.g., discuss if certain tasks should be planned differently etc.). The aptitude committee evaluates the suitability of the candidate for conducting a research project independently and authoring a doctoral thesis. The feedback from the aptitude committee should mainly benefit the doctoral candidate but also the supervisor and second advisor.

What are the deadlines?

The AC will take place at the latest 12 months after provisional admission of the doctoral candidate. The following deadlines must be met:

- At least 2 weeks before the aptitude colloquium, the doctoral candidate submits the details (date, time etc.) via e-mail (using the provided [report sheet](#))
- At least 2 weeks before the aptitude colloquium, the doctoral candidate submits the [doctoral plan](#) as a PDF file by [e-mail to the Doctoral Administration Office of D-GESS](#)

What is the procedure of the aptitude colloquium?

The [doctoral plan](#) must be submitted to the Doctoral Administration Office of D-GESS no later than two weeks prior to the aptitude colloquium. For the doctoral plan, the applicant must use [the template provided on the D-GESS website](#). The Doctoral candidate and the thesis supervisors are responsible for compliance with the deadlines and for the completeness of the information. If a doctoral plan is not submitted on time or is incomplete, the chairperson of the aptitude committee may cancel the aptitude colloquium.

The [thesis supervisor](#) recommends a chairperson for the aptitude committee as soon as possible by [e-mail to the Doctoral Administration Office](#) of D-GESS.

[Doctoral students](#) are responsible for organising the aptitude colloquium (arranging dates with the aptitude committee, booking rooms, organising [video conferencing](#) if physical presence is not possible). If the aptitude committee members and/or the doctoral candidate take part by video link, two-way communication – both video and audio – must be guaranteed during the entire aptitude colloquium.

The [aptitude colloquium](#) lasts at least 30 minutes. During the aptitude colloquium, the candidate presents his / her research project for at least 15 minutes and then answers questions from the aptitude committee and, if applicable, from other persons present.

The role of the [chairperson](#) is to make sure that the exam is conducted in a fair way. After the aptitude colloquium, the chairperson informs the doctoral candidate about the decision, i.e., “passed” or “failed” and provides the minutes and the result to the Doctoral Administration Office of D-GESS (using the provided [assessment sheet](#)).

What happens if the aptitude colloquium is “failed”?

If the result of the AC is concluded unanimously as “failed” the examination may be repeated once, provided that the doctoral thesis supervisor agrees. If the aptitude committee unanimously assessed the first attempt as “failed”, the doctoral thesis supervisor may also refuse a repetition. If the aptitude colloquium is not unanimously concluded as „passed“ or “failed”, the doctoral committee makes the final decision.

Any repetition of the AC must take place within three months after the first AC result was communicated.