Department of Physics (D-PHYS)

Doctoral Studies Instructions V4
As of 31 January 2018

If you wish to complete a doctorate in D-PHYS you must fulfil certain requirements – in addition to your actual research – before you are admitted to the doctoral examination. For further information on doctoral studies in D-PHYS please see:
- the Academic Services website (https://www.ethz.ch/en/doctorate.html)
- the student portal (https://www.ethz.ch/students/en/doctorate.html)
- the D-PHYS website (https://www.phys.ethz.ch/doctoral-studies.html)
- and the details below.

CHRONOLOGICAL PROGRESSION

The maximum duration for a doctorate is 6 years.

a) 12 months after registering for doctoral studies:

Submission of the research plan
The research plan outlines the scope of your research work, tasks and further duties during your doctoral studies. It is an agreement between you and your supervisor. Within 12 months after enrolment the signed research plan must be submitted, together with the title page and the approval form, to the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office (as well as an electronic PDF-version of the research plan). It will then be approved by the Doctoral Committee of the Department and forwarded to the Vice-Rector who will give final confirmation of your admission to the doctoral studies (full candidacy). The deadline to hand in the research plan is shown in your myStudies account. If you cannot meet the deadline, you must fill in an application to extend the deadline for submitting your research plan. Extensions of the deadline require the approval of the Doctoral Committee.

Qualifying exams
Qualifying exams may be demanded. The exact details of these admission requirements are decided upon by the Doctoral Committee of the Department, in consultation with the thesis supervisor. They are then confirmed in the admission letter from the Vice-Rector for Doctoral Studies and you are notified accordingly. The admission requirements must be met within one year starting from the date of the admission letter. The research plan may only be submitted once all qualifying exams have been passed.

b) 3 years after registering for doctoral studies:

Approval of examiners and co-examiners
Co-examiners offer support - in addition to the supervisor - to the doctoral student. They issue a written report on the doctoral thesis and submit it to the Doctoral Administration Office of the Department at the latest one week before the oral examination. They participate in the doctoral examination.

In accordance with the supervisor you nominate one or several co-examiners. The supervisor or the doctoral student hands in a request for approval of each co-examiner to the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office (mail to doktorat@phys.ethz.ch). Please indicate family name, first name, affiliation, the complete mailing address and e-mail address of each co-examiner. The Doctoral Committee then approves the co-examiner. After approval your co-examiners can be seen in your myStudies account.

Rules for the choice of co-examiners
If your supervisor is not a full or an associate, assistant or SNF professor, you need an ETH professor as co-examiner. If there is a dependence relationship between the supervisor and the first co-examiner, an additional independent co-examiner is required.
Deadlines for the nomination of co-examiners
The first and compulsory co-examiner (professor or PhD) has to be approved at the latest 3 years after the beginning of the doctoral studies. This deadline is shown in myStudies.

Additional co-examiners may be nominated and approved by the Doctoral Committee at any time. However, you have to make sure that your co-examiners are approved at the latest 1 month before your doctoral examination.

c) 6-3 months before the planned doctoral examination:

Confirmation of course attendance (credit points)
It is expected that you broaden your knowledge by following lectures, attending summer schools, giving talks or actively participating in conferences and workshops. The detailed stipulations of D-PHYS regarding doctoral studies describe how credits are earned and computed at D-PHYS. These credits do not correspond to ECTS credits. At least 12 credits are required (including 4 from outside your field of research). Please discuss the details with your supervisor.

It is recommended to have the credit points confirmed about half a year before your planned doctoral examination. The acquired credits are confirmed by the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office on the “Registration for Doctoral Examination” form. Additionally please bring extracts from myStudies and/or the course attendance confirmation sheet for doctoral students.

d) 3-1 months before the planned doctoral examination:

Set the examination date
The date of the planned doctoral examination has to be established with the Chair, in consultation with the supervisor and the co-examiners at the latest one month before the examination. Please contact the assistant (contact person) of the Chair, who is responsible for the appointment assignment and inform the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office about the fixed date. The examination room is organized by the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office.

If you have difficulties in finding an examination date please contact the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office.

Thesis submission to the supervisor and co-examiners
Doctoral students are responsible for distributing copies of their thesis to the supervisor and co-examiners at the latest one month before the defense. It is good practice for the examiners and co-examiners to receive a version of the thesis well in advance.

e) 12 working days before the examination at the latest:

Registration for the examination at ETH Zentrum
The definitive registration for the examination has to be made with the Doctoral Administration Office of the Academic Services at ETH Zentrum. Candidates may only register for the doctoral examination with the agreement of the examiner and in consultation with the co-examiners and the Chair.
The following documents must be delivered to the Doctoral Administration Office of the Academic Services:
- Completed registration form (with the confirmation of the credit points of the Department);
- One hardcopy of the thesis operative for the examination see “Ordinance on Doctoral Studies”;
- Separate author CV.
Upon the definitive registration you receive your thesis number.

**Thesis submission**
This thesis version submitted to the Doctoral Administration Office of the Academic Services (and also to the examiner and co-examiners) is the version operative for the examination. The D-PHYS Doctoral Administration receives the hardcopy of the thesis handed in at the Doctoral Administration Office at ETH Zentrum upon registration and forwards it to the Chair. Please hand in this version of the thesis also electronically (PDF via mail or Polybox) to the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office (doktorat@phys.ethz.ch).

**f) 10 working days before the examination:**

**Invitation to the examination**
The D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office sends out the official invitation to the examination with the examination room number and the request for the reviews to be submitted. The reviews of examiners and co-examiners must be received 1 week before the examination at the latest (by e-mail or postal mail). The originals of the reviews may be brought to the examination and/or be signed there.

**g) At the examination date:**

**Examination procedure**
- The entire examination lasts at least 1 hour.
- The doctoral student’s 20-to-30-minute presentation at the beginning of the doctoral examination is in principle open to the public. The Chair may decide otherwise, however.
- The examination part after the presentation is NOT open to the public.
- Both the committee and the invited D-PHYS professors may ask questions. All D-PHYS professors are invited.

**Physical Presence of the Examination Committee**
The minimum number of persons from the Examination Committee obliged to be physically present at the doctoral examination are the chairperson, the thesis supervisor and at least one co-examiner. Other members of the Examination Committee may participate via videoconferencing.

**h) After the examination:**

**Confirmation**
You can get a confirmation of your PhD from the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office at your request.

**Corrections**
The doctoral student may be required to do minor or major corrections. Minor corrections are at the supervisor’s discretion. If major corrections have to be done by the doctoral student, the Chair will provide details in writing and the supervisor has to confirm that the corrections have been done to the D-PHYS Doctoral Administration Office. Only after this confirmation the thesis will be further processed for approval by the Department Conference.

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2 [https://rechtssammlung.sp.ethz.ch/Dokumente/340.31en.pdf](https://rechtssammlung.sp.ethz.ch/Dokumente/340.31en.pdf)
3 [as per the Department Conference ruling of 28.02.2014](https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/common/docs/weisungssammlung/files-en/doctoral-examinations-presence-examination-committee.pdf)
4 [https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/common/docs/weisungssammlung/files-en/doctoral-examinations-presence-examination-committee.pdf](https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/common/docs/weisungssammlung/files-en/doctoral-examinations-presence-examination-committee.pdf)
**Departmental Conference**
The thesis is approved at the Departmental Conference which follows the doctoral examination. The title and content of the thesis may no longer be changed after the Departmental Conference. If the examination date is 2 weeks or less before the Department Conference, the approval of the thesis will be postponed to the following Departmental Conference.

**Doctoral graduation date**
After the Department Conference and the doctoral graduation date the thesis will be definitively be confirmed. After the doctoral graduation date you will automatically be de-matriculated. From that moment on the examination will officially be considered as passed, and the Academic Services will issue a provisional confirmation.

The deposit copies of the thesis have to be handed in within 6 months from the doctoral graduation date to the Doctoral Administration Office at ETH Zentrum. Only once these deposit copies have been delivered can you officially use the title of “Doctor”. One of the deposit copies has to be signed by your supervisor. Please, also consult the details concerning the hardcopies and electronic versions to be submitted.

**Doctoral awards ceremony**
A doctoral awards ceremony at which doctoral certificates are presented takes place four times a year. Once you have handed in the deposit copies you will receive an invitation to the doctoral awards ceremony for which you have to register.

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5 [https://www.ethz.ch/students/en/doctorate/final-steps/deposit-copies.html](https://www.ethz.ch/students/en/doctorate/final-steps/deposit-copies.html)