

New doctorate regulations

ITES regulations - Aptitude Colloquium

Preamble

The new doctorate regulations introduced an Aptitude Colloquium. The regulations of the aptitude colloquium come from the ETH-wide ordinance and include D-USYS detailed regulations. Each institute is responsible for the organization of the Aptitude Colloquium, within the regulations of the ETH-wide ordinance and D-USYS regulations.

The scope of this document is to explain the detailed ITES regulations for the Aptitude Colloquium.

ITES regulations

Choice and role of the chairperson and other aptitude committee members

The chairperson is a professor of ITES selected based on a rotation system. The role of the chair is to moderate the discussion. The chair can ask questions. The chair writes the [protocol](#), takes part to the decision, and communicates the result: passed or failed; a comprehensive explanation if there is disagreement among the committee members; statement on teaching activities and further tasks.

Additional committee members (beside the supervisor, 2nd advisor and the chairperson) can be appointed at the request of the supervisor and after consultation with the doctoral student.

Recommendations on the composition of the aptitude committee

Appointment of external members in the committee, such as a professor or a senior scientist from another department or a leading scientist from a different University, not necessarily from the same discipline, is strongly recommended.

Junior scientists (<5 years after the PhD) can be appointed as the second advisor or an additional committee member.

Organization of the colloquium

In agreement with the supervisor, the Phd student...

- 1) contacts the supervisor and co-examiners to find and set a date for the AC
- 2) contacts the ITES Secretariat (ites.info@usys.ethz.ch), who identify an ITES professor who can act as chair (*there is a rotating list*) and check the date with the ITES professor
- 3) contacts the group's administrative assistant to reserve a room for the AC
- 4) sends the invitation to the committee members, to the ITES Secretariat (ites.info@usys.ethz.ch), and to ITES-ALL (ites@usys.ethz.ch) only if it is an 'open event' decided by Phd student and supervisor
- 5) sends the signed [form](#), no later than 1 month before the aptitude colloquium to D-USYS Doctoral Administration Office (phd@usys.ethz.ch)

Note that the Doctoral Plan must be submitted 15 working days before the colloquium.

Colloquium

The aptitude colloquium lasts a maximum of 1 hour and proceeds as follows:

- Presentation of the project/research proposal in a 20' talk
- Questions & answers

It is followed by an in-depth discussion among the committee members (not open to the public and without doctoral student) and recommendations to the student.

The aptitude colloquium is in general open to the public. However, upon agreement of the supervisor and doctoral student, the colloquium can be limited to the doctoral candidate and the committee. The publication on the ITES web site will specify if the colloquium is 'open' or 'closed' to the public.

ETH-Wide and D-USYS Regulations related to the Aptitude Colloquium

Department regulation (Lenny Winkel and Madlaina Gartmann 15 December 2021)

Point 4. Composition of aptitude committee (ETH-DO art. 16, USYS-DR art. 6)

The aptitude committee shall be composed of:

- A **chairperson**: this person must be a member of the professors' conference of a department of ETH Zurich. The selection of the chairperson will be organized at the level of the institute (e.g., having a rotating list of professors who will act as chairs or an enrolment list as is done for PhD defense chairs at D-USYS).
- the supervisor of the doctoral thesis;
- the 2nd advisor.

- The Aptitude Committee can be extended to include further experts (e.g., project collaborators) at the request of the supervisor and after consultation with the doctoral student.

Point 5. Aptitude colloquium (ETH-DO art. 12-15, ETH-IP art. 4, USYS-DR art. 5)

The aim is to examine the doctoral student's suitability for conducting the doctoral project

The colloquium should take place within 12 months of provisional admission; it can be repeated once

It lasts a maximum of 1 hour and proceeds as follows:

- presentation of the project/research proposal in a 20' talk
- questions & answers
- in-depth discussion and recommendations by the aptitude committee.

The procedure can be further regulated, e.g., on institute-level. For example, discussions with & without the doctoral student and with & without the supervisor can be conducted.

Ordinance on the Doctorate at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

(ETH Zurich Ordinance on the Doctorate) of 23 November 2021 (Version: 1 January 2022)

Art. 12 Aptitude colloquium: Deadline

All candidates must undergo the scrutiny of an aptitude colloquium within twelve months of provisional admission. The same deadline period also applies to doctoral programs but can start at a later point if the Rector permits.

Art. 13 Aptitude colloquium: Tasks of the aptitude committee

The aptitude committee, within the framework of the aptitude colloquium, has the following duties:

- a. Focusing on the research objective described in the doctoral plan, it considers the suitability of the candidate for conducting a research project independently and authoring a doctoral thesis.
- b. It evaluates the investigation of the applicant as "passed" or "failed" and provides the result to the doctoral committee in writing, together with any additional comments on the research objective.
- c. It gives its opinion on the further points in the doctoral plan as listed in Art. 11, Para. 1(b–d) and may provide recommendations. The opinion is also set out in writing but has no influence on the overall assessment mentioned in (b) above.

Art. 14 Aptitude colloquium: Decision, and repetition of the examination

1 If the result of the evaluation described in Art. 13 (b) is not unanimous, the doctoral committee will decide the matter within one month of the aptitude colloquium. The doctoral committee will take its decision by focusing on the research objective 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.

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

Art. 15 Aptitude colloquium: Extension of the deadline

On substantiated request the Vice Rector for Doctoral Studies may extend the deadline for the first aptitude colloquium or the repetition of the examination. Requests for extension must always contain a statement on the matter by the doctoral thesis supervisor.

Art. 16 Composition of the aptitude committee

1 The aptitude committee is composed of the following persons:

- a. A member of the doctoral committee or someone named by the doctoral committee as chairperson; this person must be a member of the Professors’ Conference of an ETH Zurich department
- b. The doctoral thesis supervisor
- c. The second advisor

2 The doctoral committee may add further persons to the aptitude committee in individual cases or in general. These persons are entitled to participate in the examination.

Art. 17 Definitive admission

Definitive admission to the doctorate proceeds if the aptitude colloquium evaluates the examination as “passed”.