

Information sheet: Evaluation of dissertations

The referee and the coreferee(s) create written evaluations of the dissertation (Ordinance on Doctoral Studies ETH Zürich of 1 July 2008, Art. 28).

The evaluation contains the author contact details (title, name, university/research institution/firm, postal address, telephone number, email address), the date the document was created and the signature of the author.

Generally, an evaluation is one to two pages long and structured as follows:

1. Summary of the dissertation

The topic of the dissertation should be summarised briefly.

2. Evaluation of the dissertation's quality and innovative contribution

To judge the quality and the innovative contribution of a dissertation, the following points are to be considered:

Form and structure

- Is the work well structured? Is the structure logical?
- How good is the level of language?
- Are texts, graphics and tables well formulated?

Introduction and goals

- Is the introduction to the particular issues adequately long and complex?
- Is the research question clearly formulated?

Methods

- Are the methods clearly described and is their use justified?

Results

- Is the analysis of the data clearly described and is their interpretation conclusive?

Discussion and conclusions

- Does the work contain a discussion of the methods and results?
- Are the results compared with the literature and are clear conclusions drawn?
- Is there a justification of the conclusions based on the results?
- Are further experiments/perspectives indicated?

Literature

- Is the cited literature comprehensive, relevant and current?

Originality and complexity of the work

- How high is the scientific originality of the work?
- How complex are the methods used?
- What position does the work take within the sphere of this specialised field?

Cumulative dissertations

- Is it made clear in the introduction which over-arching research question connects the individual publications and how the publications contribute to answering the research question?
- Does the concluding discussion cover all of the manuscripts?
- Are all the individual results brought together?
- Are the methods discussed extensively?
- Is the research question that was formulated in the introduction answered in the manuscripts?

3. Recommendation on acceptance or rejection of the dissertation

A clear recommendation for the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation must be expressed. Any deficiencies should be declared with an indication as to whether the dissertation will only be recommended for acceptance after the deficiencies are resolved.

The evaluation must be sent either electronically per e-mail (pdf) or as a fax to the department by the day before the doctoral examination, and the hardcopy carrying the original signature must be handed over to the chairperson at the doctoral examination.