D-BIOL doctoral examinations: rules and things to take care of

1. Registration of co-referees

Co-referees who are not professors appointed by ETH must be registered with the biology department’s doctoral studies panel no later than 1 year before the estimated end of a doctoral study (exception: in ETH-external dissertations co-referees are confirmed with the acceptance of the application form, i.e. do not have to be registered again). The appropriate registration document is to be used (see below).

http://www.biol.ethz.ch/doctstudents/ApprovalCoreferees.pdf

2. Confirmation of credit units

The submission of a dissertation at the doctoral studies administration office must be accompanied by documentary confirmation of awarded credit units by the D-BIOL (signature on the registration form of the person in charge at the D-BIOL study secretariate). In order to get this signature the following documents are required:

- the doctoral examination registration form
- the proofs of efforts
- a short written explanation from the dissertation supervisor expressing that in his/her opinion the requirements concerning the awarded credit units were fulfilled according to the doctoral studies regulations and the detailed guidelines of the D-BIOL

It is recommended to take care of this confirmation from the study secretariate early enough, so that any delay during the examination registration procedure may be avoided.

3. Registration for the doctoral examination at the ETH rectorate

Twelve workdays prior to the examination three things have to be brought to the doctoral studies administration office of the rectorate in order to register for the examination:

- examination copy of the doctoral thesis
- a separate copy of the curriculum vitae
4. Organization of the doctoral examination

The examination committee comprises the referee, co-referee(s) and a chairperson (one of the full or associate professors of the D-BIOL, arranged by the department).

Fixing a date

The PhD student is requested to pick one of the time slots from the list of doctoral examinations [see D-BIOL website] suitable for the referee and all co-referees. Please forward date, time and room number [to be reserved by the doctoral student at ETH Hönggerberg, Zentrum or the Irchel Campus] to Carmen Fischer-Romero [carmen.fischer@biol.ethz.ch] as soon as the date has been fixed so it will appear “reserved” on the list mentioned above.

The oral examination

The oral examination starts with a public presentation by the candidate on the most important results that have been obtained during her/his PhD [maximum duration: 20 minutes]. Questions from the public after the presentation are allowed.

The second part of the oral examination (minimum duration: 40 minutes), from which the public is excluded, consists of a detailed discussion between the candidate and the examiners on specific aspects of the thesis and the implications of the results in a broader scientific context. The candidate may illustrate answers to the examiner’s questions with figures from the presentation. Additional figures prepared by the candidate are not allowed for answering questions.

The result will be communicated to the candidate subsequent to the examination. If the examiners request changes in the thesis, a date will be fixed until when the final version of the thesis must be presented to the examiners.

Procedures after the examination

After the final version has been accepted by the examiners it will be confirmed by the next Departementskonferenz and the following Studienkonferenz. After having passed both conferences the next steps will be communicated by the rectorate. No further action is required until then.