

Information sheet: Evaluation of doctoral theses

The reviewer and the co-reviewer(s) are asked to provide written evaluations of the doctoral thesis before the oral defense (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 when the document was finalized and the signature of the author.

Generally, an evaluation is **one to two pages long** and gives account of the following points:

1. Summary of the doctoral thesis

The topic of the doctoral thesis should be summarized briefly.

2. Evaluation of quality and innovative contribution

To judge the quality and the innovative contribution of a doctoral thesis, the following items should be considered:

- **Form and structure**

Is the work well structured? Is the structure logical?
How good is the level of language?
Is the format of the text, graphics and tables adequate?

- **Introduction and goals**

Is the introduction adequate in length and detail?
Are the research questions and goals clearly stated?

- **Methods**

Are the methods clearly described and is their use justified?

- **Results**

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

- **Discussion and conclusions**

Does the work contain a critical discussion of the methods and results?
Are the results and interpretation compared with the available literature?
Is the own research achievement clearly distinguished from other scientists' work?
Is there a justification for the conclusions based on the results?
Does the doctoral thesis provide an outlook or a perspective of the field?

- **Literature**

Is the cited literature adequate/relevant and complete?

- **Originality and context of the work**

How high is the scientific originality of the work?

How does the research work compare to the status of the field?

- **Cumulative doctoral thesis***

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 included publications?

Is the contribution by the doctoral student to each publication clarified?

3. Recommendation on acceptance or rejection of the doctoral thesis

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

The evaluation must be sent electronically per e-mail (pdf) to the department at the latest one week before the doctoral examination, and the hardcopy carrying the original signature must be handed over to the chairperson at the doctoral examination at the latest.

* cumulative doctoral theses are the exception and need the permission of the doctoral board of the department