

PROCEDURE FOR THE ON-LINE DEFENCE OF DOCTORAL THESES

In accordance with the Royal Decree 99/2011 (consolidated on 3/6/2016) and with the Doctorate Regulations of the University of Cantabria (UC), the following procedure has been established for the on-line defence of doctoral theses.

I) PROCEDURE

The viva voce for the defence of the doctoral thesis will take place in a public session at a time during a term in the academic calendar.

The chairperson or the secretary of the examining Panel shall create two virtual rooms, one for the constitution and deliberations of the Panel and the other for the public session, and shall send the link to the Doctoral School (EDUC) in good time so that it can be publicised.

1) Formation of the Examining Panel

The panel will be formed on-line before the start of the viva voce. The members must identify themselves appropriately by showing their ID card or passport and they will establish the procedure to be followed.

For the valid formation of the examining panel and as regards holding the viva voce, the regulations for collegial organisations in the Law of the Legal Regime of Public Administrations and Common Administrative Procedure will be followed.

2) Defence of the thesis

Once the panel has been formed, the videoconference will begin at the set time. The chairperson will open the session by identifying the doctorate student who will show his/her ID card or passport. The chairperson will invite the student to speak, indicating the time available for the presentation, and any instructions that are deemed necessary for the proceedings of the session.

The defence will consist of the explanation by the student of the work carried out, the methodology, contents and conclusions of the research, with particular attention to its original contributions. In this time, the student may use a powerpoint presentation or similar. The presentation will be worked during the viva voce by the student.

When the doctoral student has finished his/her presentation, the chairperson will invite the panel members to speak, beginning with the secretary, and they will make any comments or ask the student all the questions they consider appropriate.

The doctors attending the session will be able to intervene in the time and form indicated by the chairperson of the examining panel.

3) Deliberation and qualification

After the thesis has been discussed, the panel will withdraw to another virtual room to deliberate and agree on the qualification.

Each panel member will write an individual assessment of the thesis quality and the training activities (DAD) carried out by the student. The assessment of the DAD will not give rise to a quantitative score, but is a qualitative assessment element that may complement the assessment of the thesis.

Then the panel will issue an overall report on the thesis and qualify it in terms of FAIL, PASS, VERY GOOD or OUTSTANDING.

When this deliberation has finished, the session with student and attendees will be restarted so that the chairperson can inform them of the qualification.

The chairperson will finish the academic act by asking the attendees to disconnect from the session.

4) Vote on the 'Cum laude' commendation and the proposal for the Extraordinary Award

The EDUC will ask the panel to vote in secret on the award of 'cum laude' and the Extraordinary Award by the digital procedure that has been established.

The 'cum laude' commendation will require the prior overall qualification of 'outstanding', and must be supported unanimously in a secret vote.

In a maximum of three working days after receiving the documentation, the administration in the Doctorate School will make the result known publically and will inform the student, supervisors and Academic Commission of the Doctoral Programme.

II) COMPLETING AND PROCESSING THE FORMS

In order to facilitate the procedure, the secretary will take charge of the documentation in order to send it to the EDUC, provided that the secretary belongs to the UC. If the secretary is not from that university, the panel member who does belong to the UC will take charge of the documentation.

Persons acting by videoconference must have a certified electronic signature. In the exceptional case that a certified electronic signature is not available, the documentation will be signed manually and sent to the person responsible for processing it by means of an institutional e-mail in which the conformity with the adopted agreements will be expressly stated.

1. Act of formation

When the examining panel has been formed, the secretary will complete and sign the Form with information about student, supervisors and panel and the Act of Formation of the examining panel (Documents 1A: *Form with information about student, supervisors and panel*; 1B: *Formation online thesis examining panel*).

2. Individual thesis assessment report

Each panel member will write an assessment of the thesis and the training activities carried out by the student (DAD) (Document 2: *Individual thesis assessment report*).

3. Act of the Award of Doctorate (individual declaration)

When the qualification has been agreed, each panel member and the new doctor will sign the Act of the Award of Doctorate (individual declaration) (Documents 3A: Individual doctorate award declaration and 3B: Doctoral student award declaration).

4. Act of the Award of Doctorate

Once that the individual reports and the Act of Award of Doctorate (individual declaration) mentioned above have been signed, the secretary will complete the General Certificate of Doctorate Award. This will certify the qualification awarded unanimously by the panel (Document 4: *General certificate of doctorate award*).

5. Digital Doctoral Thesis File (Teseo)

The day and qualification will be completed in the two copies provided of this form (Documents 5A and 5B: Teseo). They will be signed by the panel secretary.

6. International Mention

In the case of a thesis with international mention, the secretary will sign the Certificate of International Mention (Document 6: *Secretary International Mention Certificate*).

7. Secret vote for 'Cum Laude' Commendation and Extraordinary Award

At the end of the thesis defense, the EDUC will send an email to the panel members to vote in secret on the award of 'cum laude' and the Extraordinary Award.

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The panel member in charge of receiving the documentation must send all the documents correctly completed and signed to the Doctoral School as soon as possible, preferably at the end of the session and in no case later than 48 hours after the session.