

SUBMISSION OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS - process from the preliminary defence to the final defence

1. Arrangements for the preliminary defence of a doctoral thesis

For the submission of the doctoral thesis to the doctoral studies council, the thesis must undergo a **preliminary defence** to be conducted under the responsibility of the head of the academic unit. In the School of Natural Sciences and Health, this person is the director Ruth Shimmo.

(1) The PhD candidate submits an **application** addressed to the head of the academic unit for allowing the thesis to be submitted for the preliminary defence.

The application must include:

- The title of the thesis in Estonian, English and in the original language (if it differs from the first two);
- CERCS code(s) of the thesis;
- A statement of the doctoral student that there is no plagiarism in his/her doctoral thesis and in the articles that form a part thereof;
- The supervisor's/supervisors' consent for allowing the thesis to be submitted to the preliminary defence;
- The application is signed by the doctoral student and the supervisor(s).

In addition to the application, the following documents must be submitted:

- File(s) of the doctoral thesis;
- In case of an article-based dissertation, PDFs of articles may be submitted separately;
- Results of the verification by the plagiarism detection system (an Ouriginal report) together with a confirmation of the doctoral student and the supervisor that they have examined the results. The Ouriginal report can be generated by the supervisor. In the case the supervisor is not able to do that, the study counsellor must be asked to generate the report and forward it to the supervisor(s) and the doctoral student.

The PhD candidate submits the application via e-mail to Ruth Shimmo, the Director of the School of Natural Sciences and Health (ruth.shimmo@tlu.ee). Please add the study counsellor Greete Horn to the addressees of the e-mail (greete.horn@tlu.ee).

(2) The head of the academic unit decides (where necessary, in consultation with the doctoral studies council) on allowing/not allowing the doctoral thesis to be submitted to the preliminary defence within two weeks as of the submission of the doctoral thesis (if the doctoral thesis is submitted during the Christmas or summer break (as determined in the academic calendar) or within a period of less than two weeks before the start of the Christmas or summer break, the head of the academic unit may make the decision within two weeks after the end of the break). If the head of the academic unit is the supervisor or the co-supervisor of the thesis submitted for preliminary defence, he/she will delegate the task of making this decision to the study programme administrator or to a member of the doctoral studies council.

- If the decision is **positive**, the head of the academic unit will arrange the discussion of the version of the doctoral thesis submitted to preliminary defence. The discussion takes place as a meeting of the preliminary defence committee and can follow the format of a doctoral seminar. The decision of the preliminary defence committee is recorded in minutes and forwarded to the doctoral student, supervisor(s) and the Research Administration Office.
- If the decision is **negative**, the head of the academic unit will forward the decision to the doctoral student together with reasons and recommendations.

(3) The doctoral student checks that he/she has completed all the following by the time of submission his/her thesis to the preliminary defence:

- The study programme is completed and the transcript in the Study Information System (SIS) is correct (all necessary exams/assessments are shown);
- The ETIS account is organised and updated;
- The information regarding the topic and supervisor(s) of the doctoral thesis cannot be corrected manually in the ETIS, it will be generated from the SIS. If the topic and/or the supervisor(s) of the thesis has/have changed but the information does not show in the SIS, an application must be submitted before the submission of the doctoral thesis to the preliminary defence for the council of the School of Natural Sciences and Health to approve the new topic and/or supervisor(s).

(4) Reviewers at the preliminary defence

- For preliminary defence, the head of the academic unit appoints two reviewers, in concordance with the doctoral studies council, of whom at least one must be from outside the university.
- The preliminary defence does not take place. In the event that the opinions of both reviewers are negative, the preliminary defence committee decides to cancel the preliminary defence.
- After a successful preliminary defence, at least one of the reviewers will receive a proposition to act as a reviewer in the defence.

(5) Preliminary defence committee

A preliminary defence committee consists of at least three members appointed by the head of the academic unit in concordance with the chair of the doctoral studies council. The members of the committee include at least one member of the doctoral studies council; it is also recommended to include the **administrator** of the corresponding doctoral programme in the committee. If the head of the academic unit is at the same time the chair of the doctoral studies council, he/she coordinates the composition of the preliminary defence committee with the Vice-Rector. The supervisors and co-supervisors of a doctoral thesis are not appointed as members of the preliminary defence committee.

(6) Preparations for the preliminary defence

- The School of Natural Sciences and Health makes the file(s) of the doctoral thesis and the Original report electronically available to the preliminary defence committee members.
- With the involvement of the preliminary defence committee members, the doctoral student and the supervisor(s), a suitable time for the preliminary defence is determined.
- The deadline for submitting the review is agreed with the reviewers.
- The doctoral student prepares the presentation of the doctoral thesis for the preliminary defence (max. 20 minutes)
- The School forwards the submitted reviews to the doctoral student and makes them available to the preliminary defence committee members. The doctoral student receives the reviewers' opinions no later than three days before the preliminary defence for information.

(7) Result of the preliminary defence

The result of the preliminary defence may be one of the following:

- **Recommended to be submitted for defence in its current form.** The doctoral thesis is allowed to be submitted for defence in its current form if both reviewers make the relevant proposal and the preliminary defence committee gives its consent.
- **Recommended to be submitted for defence after the corrections proposed by the preliminary defence committee have been made.** If, at the preliminary defence, the doctoral thesis is allowed to be submitted for defence after the corrections proposed by the preliminary defence committee have been made, the supervisor of the doctoral student confirms the corrections or the reasons for having a differing opinion.
- **The doctoral thesis is returned to the doctoral student for further work.** The doctoral thesis will be returned to the doctoral student for further work if this is proposed by at least one reviewer. If the doctoral thesis is returned to the doctoral student for further work, he/she may not submit a new version for preliminary defence until six months have passed.

After a second negative result of the preliminary defence, the progress review committee may declare the doctoral student to have failed to meet the requirements of part-time studies and propose to delete the doctoral student from the matriculation register due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

2. Procedure following the preliminary defence

(1) The School formalises the preliminary defence decision and registers it in WD and forwards to the Division of Doctoral Studies. Together with the preliminary defence decision, the reviews of the preliminary defence and the Ouriginal report are forwarded.

(2) The doctoral student begins to make the corrections in the thesis on the basis of the recommendations given in the reviews and by the preliminary defence committee.

- Upon making the corrections, it is recommended to draw up a synoptic table with three columns: the proposal is marked in the first one; whether the proposal has been taken into consideration or not - in the second column; and the reasons for having a differing opinion regarding the proposals that were not taken into consideration - in the third column.
- The supervisor of the thesis confirms the corrections or the reasons for having a differing opinion.

(3) Editing and proofreading

The doctoral student sends the corrected thesis which has been deemed to be complete by the doctoral student and the supervisor to a language editing service provider. The student can generally use the resources from the doctoral scholarship for this purpose. A specialist of doctoral studies can intermediate the university's contacts of the language editing service providers to the doctoral student. The doctoral student accepts the appropriate remarks and proposals of the editor.

Completed and edited file(s) of the doctoral thesis will be checked in Ouriginal. This must be done by the same person who carried out the check in the course of the preliminary defence. If the Ouriginal check was not done by the supervisor of the doctoral student, the report is forwarded to the doctoral student and to the supervisor for reviewing. Where necessary, the doctoral student and the supervisor prepare a written short explanation on possible overlaps found in the Ouriginal report that do not indicate plagiarism.

3. Submission of the doctoral thesis for the final defence

The doctoral student submits the following documents together with the electronic manuscript (not to be submitted as a PDF-file!) to the Division of Doctoral Studies:

- A signed application for the examination and defence of the doctoral thesis addressed to the chair of the doctoral studies council. The application must include a statement of the doctoral student that the doctoral thesis in question has not been defended previously at any other higher education institution and that the doctoral thesis constitutes the student's own original research work. The application must also include a statement of the doctoral student that there is no plagiarism in his/her doctoral thesis and in the articles that form a part thereof. If the English title of the thesis is not reflected in the doctoral thesis, the doctoral student also submits the English version of the title;
- Electronic copies (PDF-file) of the publications published on the topic of the doctoral thesis;
- In case of an article-based dissertation, permissions from the publishers for the republication of the articles in the doctoral thesis both in the electronic form and on paper;
- The supervisor's signed confirmation regarding the making of corrections which were recommended at the preliminary defence or reasons for having a differing opinion;
- The version of the report of the plagiarism detection system Ouriginal from where only the previous version of the doctoral thesis (which was submitted for preliminary defence) has been removed as an overlapping source;
- Where necessary, a written short explanation on possible overlaps found in the Ouriginal report that do not indicate plagiarism. The supervisor adds it to the documents to be submitted for the defence together with a summary confirmation that there is no plagiarism on the basis of the report in the parts of the doctoral thesis which were checked.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses:
<https://www.tlu.ee/en/practical-information-phd-students#regulations-and-documents>
- Guidelines for formatting a doctoral thesis:
<https://www.tlu.ee/en/practical-information-phd-students#guidelines-for-formatting-a-doctoral-thesis>

The check-list of the doctoral student

Submission for the preliminary defence

	An application addressed to the head of the academic unit
	File(s) of the doctoral thesis
	Ouriginal report
	Everything in order in the SIS and all courses completed
	Everything in order in the ETIS and all publications recorded

Activities following the preliminary defence

	Corrections proposed by the preliminary defence committee and the reviewers have been incorporated
	The table on proposed corrections taken into consideration / not taken into consideration has been prepared and confirmed by the supervisor
	The doctoral thesis has been submitted for language editing
	Editor(s)' corrections have been incorporated
	The final version of the doctoral thesis has been checked in Ouriginal and the explanation by the supervisor regarding overlaps has been prepared

Submission for the final defence

	Application addressed to the chair of the doctoral studies council
	File(s) of the doctoral thesis
	Electronic copies (PDF-file) of the publications published on the topic of the doctoral thesis
	In case of an article-based dissertation, permissions from the publishers for the republication of the articles
	The supervisor's signed confirmation as regards taking the proposed corrections into consideration
	Ouriginal report
	Where necessary, an explanation confirmed by the supervisor on possible overlaps