



DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Guide to Writing and Presenting the Doctoral Thesis

Text adapted from the
*Regulations Concerning the Writing, Authorisation and Examination of Doctoral
Theses*

Approved by the Governing Body of the University of Alcalá at its session of 28 September 2016

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1. Definition

The Doctoral Thesis is an original piece of research written by the student in any discipline covered by the research lines set out in the doctoral programmes of the University of Alcalá. The Thesis should qualify the candidate to work autonomously in the field of R&D and Innovation.

2. Language

As well as in Spanish, the Thesis may be written and, where applicable, examined in one of the habitual languages used for scientific communication in its field of knowledge. In this case, it must include a summary in Spanish containing at least the background, methodology and conclusions of the work done.

In order for the Thesis to be expounded in a foreign language, the members of the examining panel must indicate their express agreement that the examination be carried out in that language.

3. Format

It is advisable that the Thesis includes at least the following sections:

- Introduction to the subject of research, as well as a working hypothesis, objectives, methodology, delimitations of scope, structure, etc.
- A presentation of the results of the research carried out.
- A discussion of the results obtained.
- Conclusions.
- Bibliography.
- It can also include as many appendices as may be deemed appropriate.

The Thesis can be submitted both in electronic and paper format. If you choose the paper format, the Thesis will have a durable binding (hard or semi-hard covers) carrying the following details on both the front cover and the spine: title, author and year. The cover should also include the name of the University of Alcalá and the Doctoral Programme (see Annex 1). The University logotype, which should be included in both formats, will comply with the stipulations of the basic rules for use of the corporate image of the University of Alcalá.¹

In both formats, on the title page of the Thesis, which has no page number, the following information must appear: the corporate image of the University, the name of the Doctoral Programme, the title of the Thesis, the name of the student, the number of the supervisor(s) and the year (see Annex 2).

¹ For information about the corporate image of the UAH, see the following website:
https://portal.uah.es/portal/page/portal/servicio_comunicacion/imagen_institucional

In paper format, as the first two pages of each of the copies of the Doctoral Thesis, originals of two positive reports should be inserted: on the one hand, the report of the Supervisor(s) and the Tutor, if different from the Supervisor and, on the other hand, the approval of the Coordinator of the Doctoral Programme. In those copies submitted in electronic format, these reports should be scanned and included in the PDF file of the Thesis.

4. Compendium of articles

With the authorisation of the Academic Committee, it is possible to present the Thesis as a compendium of articles written by the student and published in organs of recognised repute. The minimum number of articles is three. In this case, in addition to the articles, the Thesis must include an ample summary lending coherence to the piece of research as a whole, indicating its overall line of argument, and appending a chapter by way of conclusion. The impact factor of the articles that form part of a compendium of publication Thesis should follow the criteria listed by the Spanish National Evaluation of Research Activity Committee (CNEAI)

5. Submission requirement

The submission and defence of the doctoral Thesis cannot be done in the same academic year the doctoral student has carried out the matriculation for the Doctoral Program in which he or she will defend the Thesis. At least twelve months must elapse between the date of registration and deposit. In that period, the Academic Committee of the programme must have issued a positive report on the student's *Research Plan* and the *Record of Activities Document*.

Once the Thesis is finished, the doctoral student should submit it, together with the positive report of the Thesis supervisor, for approval to the Academic Committee of the programme. Before giving this approval, the Academic Committee will ask the Doctoral School for the student's academic record to ensure it complies with the requirements for presenting a Doctoral Thesis.

If the defence of the Thesis is authorised, the Academic Committee of the programme will draft and approve the panel proposal and send it to the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee.² This proposal will follow the regulations about the examining panel stated below and will include a brief curriculum vitae of each member of the panel, with data about their research that might be related to the contents of the Doctoral Thesis they are going to assess.

6. Deposit

In electronic format

² See the section "Forms" of the Doctoral School's website.

When depositing the Doctoral Thesis in electronic format, the student should present at the Doctoral School one CD or other electronic storage device³ with the following documents:

- The complete Thesis in one file (PDF)
- A copy of the *Record of Activities Document*.
- A Word file with an abstract of the Thesis, no longer than a page to fill in and send the TESEO form to the Ministry of Education.⁴ With the abstract, you will also indicate the areas of the Thesis according to the of the UNESCO classification (the other sections of the form will be filled by the School staff).

In paper format

When depositing the Doctoral Thesis in paper format, the student should present the following documents at the Doctoral School:

- Four printed copies of the Thesis properly bound and paginated, together with the original and three copies of the *Record of Activities Document*.
- One CD or other electronic storage device⁵ with the complete Thesis in one file (PDF).
- In this CD, you will also submit a Word file with an abstract of the Thesis, no longer than a page to fill in and send the TESEO form to the Ministry of Education. With the abstract, you will also indicate the areas of the Thesis according to the of the UNESCO classification (the other sections of the form will be filled by the School staff).

If the *Research Plan* has been modified since it was submitted for approval, a copy of the updated *Research Plan* should be presented.

If you are also applying for an International Doctorate, you should submit the following documents:

- Certificate stating the period spent outside Spain, authorized by the Director of the thesis and the Academic Committee of the programme. In duly justified cases, and always at the discretion of the Academic Committee, the research stay can be undertaken over different periods and at different centres or institutions.⁶ In the event of several research stays, each of them requires their corresponding approval and authorisation.
- Two original reports from the two expert Doctors.

³ Although the *Regulations concerning the Writing, Authorisation and Examination of Doctoral Theses* refer to six CDs, only one is necessary.

⁴ Teseo is a [data base](#) with information about the Doctoral Theses since 1976, which allows searches on theses defended in Spain.

⁵ Although the *Regulations concerning the Writing, Authorisation and Examination of Doctoral Theses* refer to six CDs, only one is necessary.

⁶ Please, see the form "Approval and authorisation of the research stay" in the website of the Doctoral School..

also present the certificate of residence, a supporting letter from the Thesis supervisor justifying the choice of the stay and the two favourable expert reports on the Thesis (photocopies will not be accepted).

If you are a member of the University staff, you could include a copy of the form for requesting social assistance, once it has been registered at the General Registry of the University (Colegio San Ildefonso, Plaza de San Diego s/n). To do so, you should make your request in the times established by the University for this purpose. See the UAH's "Reglamento de Acción Social".

The Doctoral School will give you the form for requesting permission to defend the Thesis.⁷ This form has to be handed in at the General Registry of the University. Once registered, you must present a copy at the Doctoral School, where you will be given back three copies of your Thesis to be later distributed among the members of the examining panel, except in the case of Doctoral Theses with contents needing protection, in which case the Doctoral School will take charge of sending the copies to the members of the panel.

For the purposes of presenting your request for permission to defend your Doctoral Thesis at the University's General Registry and of making deposit of your Thesis, Saturdays, the month of August, Christmas and Easter school holidays will not be considered instructional or working days.

The defence of the Thesis should be done within the next four months of the deposit date and no sooner than a month and a half after that same date.

7. Doctoral Thesis with protected material

If your Doctoral Thesis contains material which should be protected, the Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme must make a reasoned application to the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee for it to declare protected or otherwise the contents of the Thesis. The Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee will be able to declare the contents of the Thesis protected and specify a period of protection. If your Thesis is declared protected, it will only be deposited in the Doctoral School, in a sealed envelope. The kinds of exceptional circumstances which may give rise to such an application include, among others, the participation of companies in the Programme or School, the existence of confidentiality agreements with companies, or the possibility that patents might be taken out on the contents of the thesis.

8. Period of notification of the deposit

⁷ See the section "Forms" of the Doctoral Schools's website..

Once deposit of the Thesis has been recorded, the Doctoral School will notify all the University's departments and institutes of its deposit, sending a copy to the Programme Coordinator's department or institute, where it will remain on deposit for ten instructional and working days, counting from the day following the recording of the deposit. Two CDs (or other electronic storage devices) will stay on deposit at the Doctoral School.

During the period of deposit, any doctor may examine the copy deposited in the department or institute, or in the Doctoral School, communicating any observations deemed appropriate regarding the contents of the Thesis to the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee.

Any doctor wishing to review a Thesis with protected material must sign a confidentiality document. Once the Thesis has been reviewed, it will be enclosed within a new sealed envelope. The Doctoral School will record details of all persons who access the document.

9. Examining panel

9.1. Composition

The panel will be composed of three members and three substitutes, all of them doctors and with an accredited research record. Of the six members proposed, only two can belong to the university or universities responsible for the programme, one of them should be one of the three full members and the other one should be its corresponding substitute. In any case, the panel will consist of a majority of members who are not from the University of Alcalá or the institutions that collaborate with the Doctoral School in which the programme is included.

- The President of the panel must accredit some research experience equivalent to that required to have obtained two six-year research assessments in the last 16 years.
- The other two members of the panel, which will act as Secretary and Ordinary member, must accredit some research experience equivalent to that required to have obtained one six-year research assessment in the last 10 years.

If there is somebody from the University of Alcalá in the panel, he or she will act as President or Secretary. If the Secretary is not a member of the University staff, this should be assisted at all times by the administrative staff of the Programme Coordinator's department or institute.

Neither the Thesis supervisor nor the Tutor can form part of the panel except when the Thesis is presented under the aegis of bilateral co-tutorship agreements with foreign universities which contemplate such a situation.

9.2. Appointment

The Academic Committee of the Doctoral Program will submit a proposal for the composition of the examining panel to the President of the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee. The proposal must be accompanied by the acceptance of each of the members of this panel, whose signature must be original; a photocopy or scanned signature will not be admitted.

Once the defence of the Thesis has been authorised, the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint the panel following the regulations stated above.

The Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee will notify the members and substitutes of their appointment as members of the panel. Where necessary, these may notify their renunciation in the space of 72 hours. This will be done by email or fax. If no communication otherwise has been received within those 72 hours, the members of the panel will be understood to have accepted their appointment.

Should the Doctoral Thesis have contents in need of protection, this fact will be stated in the notification of appointment, together with a confidentiality document which members of the panel must sign and return before having access to the Doctoral Thesis.

9.3. Procedures prior to the defence of the Thesis

Once the period of 72 hours is over, the Doctoral School will notify, in writing, the appointment of the panel to the Academic Committee of the programme. They will also notify it by email to the Thesis Supervisor(s), to the student, to the President and Secretary of the examining panel, to the Programme Coordinator's department or institute, and to the corresponding Administrative-Management unit.

From that moment, the following procedures should be followed:

- Once the Doctoral School has received the acceptance of each member of the examining panel, with its original signature, the President of the panel will call the Act of Defence of the Thesis at least ten natural days before it is held.
- Simultaneously and in the same period of time the Secretary of the examining panel will communicate, in writing, the date of the Act of Defence to the Doctoral School.
- Both the Programme Coordinator's department or institute, and the Doctoral School will give sufficient notice of the Act of Defence.
- Once the Act of Defence has been called, the Doctoral School will send the panel Secretary all the documents necessary for the act to be conducted.
- The Programme Coordinator's department or institute will make the necessary arrangements regarding the accommodation and travel of the panel members.
- The doctoral student must pay the Thesis defence fee well in advance to the date of the Act of Defence.

10. Dispatch of copies to the members of the examining panel

Once the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee has given notice of the appointment of the panel, the student will send a copy of the Thesis to each member of the panel. Each member of the panel should have the Thesis with sufficient time before the date fixed for the defence.

Students matriculated in doctoral studies regulated by RD 99/2011 will also send a copy of the Record of Activities, with the training activities the student has done. This document will not lead to a quantitative punctuation, but it will be a qualitative evaluation tool to complement the assessment of the Doctoral Thesis.

11. Permission to defend the Doctoral Thesis

From the moment they receive the Thesis, the members of the panel have one month to submit an individual report to the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee in which the Thesis is assessed and approved or rejected. Thesis will only be defended if these three reports are positive. The requirement is not necessary for those theses that are presented as a compendium of articles or include any patent.

Once the period of public notification has finished and any observations that might have been made, as well as the reports from the panel, have been considered, the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee will proceed to give permission, or not, for the Thesis to be defended. Should no such permission be forthcoming, the Committee must inform the student, the Thesis Supervisor(s), the Tutor (if different from the Supervisor), the Coordinator of the Doctoral Programme and the Director of the School of Doctoral School of the reasons for its decision in writing.

In exceptional circumstances, if the Thesis has received some comments on the part of a doctor during its period of public display, the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee will submit it to a process of prior evaluation. To this end, reports will be requested of two experts belonging to other Universities or Research Centres in Spain or abroad which have no relation to the University Centres responsible for the Doctoral Programme as part of which the research training took place.

12. Matriculation

Once permission to defend the Doctoral Thesis has been obtained, the Doctoral School will contact the student by email informing him or her that he or she should pay the exam fees with sufficient time before the date fixed for defending the Thesis.

13. Defence

The Thesis will be examined at the "Act of defence" before the members of the panel. This act will take place in public session and will consist of the exposition and defence

of the research work carried out. Doctors present at this public act may ask questions when and as indicated by the president of the panel. In case of a Thesis with protected material, the defence will not be public.

The defence of the Thesis must be carried out in the University of Alcalá or, in the case of joint doctoral programmes, in any of the participating universities or in accordance with the terms laid out in the collaboration agreements.

It must take place during the instructional period of the school calendar, which excludes all Saturdays, the month of August, Christmas and Easter holidays, and the patron saint's days of the faculty or school where the act is to be held.

The defence of the Thesis will be valid if all the members of the examining panel have properly signed, with their original signature, their corresponding acceptance and submitted it to the Doctoral School.

Once the Act of Defence is over, the Secretary of the examining panel will fill in and submit to the Administrative-Management unit of his or her faculty or institute the certificate of composition of the examining panel (form GEF12) as well as the forms for the travel expenses (GEF11).

13.1. Some recommendations

The "Act of Defense" is a very important academic act; therefore, it should be properly prepared. It is advisable to write a good outline of the oral presentation. This outline could include the following elements:

- An introduction, with the justification for the research, the objectives, the methodology, the state of the art, etc.
- Brief summary of the main ideas.
- The most important results and conclusions.
- Acknowledgements (if applicable).

14. Incidents in the Act of Defence

Should any member of the examining panel have justified cause not to attend, he or she will be replaced by the corresponding substitute member of the proposal. The Secretary will record the fact in the minutes as well as any other that might occur in the defence of the Thesis.

For the panel to be considered properly constituted for the purposes of the defence, debate, examination and evaluation of the Thesis, the presence of the three members of the panel will be required.

15. Assessment

Once the Thesis has been defended and debated, the panel will issue a collective report⁸ and overall grade for the Thesis, according to the following scale: “Apt”, “Not apt”, “Satisfactory”, “Very Good” and “Excellent”.

The panel may award the distinction of “cum laude” if the overall grade of the Thesis is “Excellent” and all panel members have unanimously submitted their secret votes with this grade. To this end, once the act of defence is over, each member of the panel will indicate anonymously in a sealed envelope whether the Thesis is worthy of the distinction “cum laude”.

The Secretary of the panel will ensure compliance with this procedure to guarantee the secrecy of the vote, which in no case must be made known to the doctoral candidate before the scrutiny of the vote.

These votes will be scrutinised in a public session of the delegate Committee of the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee. The delegate Committee will be composed by the competent Vice-Rector, the Director of the Doctoral School, and the Head of the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Service.

Also, each member of the panel can indicate anonymously and in a sealed envelope whether he or she deems the Thesis to be worthy of the Extraordinary Doctoral Award. Similarly, the Secretary of the panel will ensure compliance with this procedure to guarantee the secrecy of the vote, which in no case must be made known to the doctoral candidate before the scrutiny of the vote.

16. Remote participation of a member of the panel by videoconference

In duly justified cases, remote participation of an ordinary member of the panel by videoconference may be authorised. In no event, the President or Secretary may act through this videoconferencing system. The Thesis Supervisor must request this possibility to the Doctoral School one month in advance and it must obtain prior authorisation.

The President of the panel will ensure that compliance with the provisions of the regulations regarding the act of defence and the assessment process is maintained. In any case, the confidentiality of the deliberations of the panel should be guaranteed.

Once the act of defence is over, the Secretary will state on the record the name and surnames of the panel member involved in the videoconference. Similarly, the Secretary will arrange to send this panel member, in due time and in paper format, the documents for the Extraordinary Doctoral Award and the distinction “cum laude”, keeping the necessary precautions for the vote to be submitted secretly. To this end, the two aforementioned envelopes, with the voting ballots inside, must be placed by the panel member in another envelope, closed and signed, and then sent to the

⁸ See the “Examination report form” in the section “Forms” of the Doctoral School’s website.

Secretary. Upon receipt of the documentation, the Secretary will submit it to the Doctoral School.

17. Documentation of the Act of Defence

In the space of one week after the Act of Defence, the Secretary of the panel will send to the Doctoral School all the documentation relative to the act of defence.

In the event that the Secretary is not a member of the University staff, once the act of defence is over, he or she will submit the documents to the administrative staff of the Programme Coordinator's department or institute, so that they are sent to the Doctoral School in the period prescribed above.

18. End of procedure

Once the doctoral Thesis has been passed, the Doctoral School will send a copy and a CD of the Thesis to the University Library for reference. Similarly, it will send the corresponding Thesis file, as regulated, and a CD with its contents to the Ministry of Education.

If the Thesis contains material that should be protected, the electronic file in the library will not be available until after the period of protection is over. A reference to this will also be included in the electronic copy sent to the Ministry of Education, to be treated with the confidentiality required during the same period.

The documentation generated as a result of the whole Doctoral Thesis authorisation and defence procedure will form part of the student's Thesis defence file and will be kept at the Doctoral School until its transfer to the University's archive.

The publication of the Thesis in any open access institutional repository should be made in accordance with the provisions of the current legislation that is applicable at all times and will require, in any case, the author's consent.

Annex 1: template for the cover

Spine of
the Thesis



Doctoral Programme in

TITLE OF THESIS

Doctoral Thesis presented by...

NAME AND SURNAME

Author

Title of Thesis

Year

Year

Annex 2: template for the title page



Doctoral Programme in ...

TITLE OF THESIS

Doctoral Thesis presented by ...

NAME AND SURNAME

Supervisor:

DR. NAME AND SURNAME

Alcalá de Henares, [year]