

The public presentation of the thesis project (FÖP) (doctoral program in mathematics)

According to the curriculum for the doctoral program, students have to complete a public presentation of the thesis project **by the end of the first year** of the doctoral study. There is a doctoral advisory board for the doctoral program in mathematics whose members participate in the presentations and together with the **director of the doctoral program (DSPL)** decide on whether the presentation is successful. Formally, PhD students do not have an advisor before the presentation. (The official terminology at our University for the role of the person who agreed to supervise you – unfortunately – is “mentor”). The registration form for the presentation in particular contains a suggestion of one or several **advisors** for the thesis project. In case of a successful presentation, the outcome is the **approval of the advisor(s) and of the thesis project**. This is a prerequisite for **signing a dissertation agreement**, which is the next step in the doctoral program.

The main purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate that there is a plan for the thesis project that the advisor(s) and the student agree on. So the focus of the presentation should be how the project fits into the scientific landscape and what the actual plans for the thesis project are. Please keep in mind that the members of the doctoral advisory board work in different areas of mathematics so please make sure that your presentation is **accessible for non-specialists** and **don't expect feedback on scientific details**. About two weeks before the presentation, you have to submit an **exposé**, a written description of the thesis project that the members of the board can use to prepare for your presentation. The usual length of the exposé is around 4 to 5 pages PDF. The presentation itself is a **talk of 20 minutes**, plus **10 minutes for questions and feedback**.

It is no problem if the presentation is done slightly later. For example, if you start in October, then you can do the presentation in October of the next year. If possible, the presentation should not be delayed further than that, however. Accordingly, in the area of mathematics, sessions for public presentations are usually offered in the first month and in the last month of each semester. Students are informed by mail about the next possibilities for presentations and asked to contact the SSC and the DSPL if they are interested in presenting in one of those. They are then involved into the planning of the session from the beginning, so that it usually is no problem to adapt the timing to the needs of all people involved. Of course, the planning of both the time and the content of the presentation should be **coordinated with your intended advisor(s)**. At least one of the advisors should be present during the presentation, there may be questions to the advisor, too.

The University and the DSPL support **joint supervisions**, so students are encouraged to have more than one advisor. If you plan to have more than one advisor, it may be a good idea to say something about the roles of the advisors during the presentation. Members of our faculty can only act as advisors if they have a habilitation or hold a professor or tenure-track position. If you are unsure about whether a specific person can act as an advisor, please check back with the DSPL. We also encourage structures like **thesis advisory committees (TACs)**, where further (internal or external) scientists are involved in monitoring the progress of the thesis project. It is recommended to discuss the possibility of setting up such a committee with the intended advisors. In case this is intended, it can be mentioned in the presentation and it should be specified in the thesis agreement.