

The final phase of the doctoral study

This is a rough description of the last part of the doctoral study. It assumes that you have completed (almost) all the courses required in your thesis agreement and that you and your supervisor agree that the thesis is approaching completion.

The main influence on the timing of the final phase is the time the referees for your thesis need for their work. It is important to agree with the referees on this time-line in advance. Keep in mind that the refereeing should be based on the final version of the thesis (which is uploaded as described below). Moreover, according to the rules of the University of Vienna, **two referees** for the thesis are selected by the "Studienpräses". Since this applies to all doctoral studies, the selection usually takes two or three weeks, which also should be kept in mind when planning the timing.

Suggestion and selection of referees: This process can be carried out before the thesis is actually completed, but it should be close to completion and the referees have to be selected before the thesis can be uploaded. The selection is based on an **ordered suggestion of three potential referees** that has to be made jointly by the student and the supervisor. The referees should be experts on the topic of the thesis and (full or associate) professors or group leaders at a University or research institution. Too close scientific contacts to the candidate, the supervisor have to be avoided (e.g. no joint publications in the last 5 years). You can only put people on a suggestion if they agree to referee the thesis if they are chosen. They should also know that not all suggested referees will be asked for a report. It is recommended to discuss the suggestion with the DSPL before officially submitting it. For student members of the Vienna School of Mathematics (VSM) this is obligatory, since it allows the suggestion of referees to be passed to the executive board of the VSM for approval. After this is done, the suggestion can officially be submitted to the SSC Mathematics using a form available via <https://doktorat.univie.ac.at/en/phd-process/forms-and-further-information/forms/>. You have to add an abstract of the thesis and links to CVs of the suggested referees (if the CVs are not available online they can also be submitted in PDF).

Once the referees are selected you will be informed by the SSC via email. It is not forbidden to send preliminary versions of the thesis to the referees, but the refereeing should only concern the final version of the thesis, which you have to send to them (see below).

Uploading the thesis: Once the thesis is finished, you have to upload it for a plagiarism-check via <https://hopla.univie.ac.at>. You have to enter the names of the referees during the upload procedure, so the selection of referees has to be completed before you can upload. The plagiarism check is by a software, but the report will be evaluated by the DSPL, who knows that standards of the field.) Please make sure that you adhere to the rules concerning the title page before uploading. The file you have uploaded should also be used to produce the three (hard-bound) hardcopies of the thesis that you have to submit at the SSC. Also send this version to the referees informing them that this is the final version on which the refereeing should be based. Please announce that they will be contacted by the SSC with a form for marking that they have to fill and a request for further information (including personal data) that will be needed. Upon completion of the plagiarism-check, you are informed by mail.

Requirements from the thesis agreement: Before a defense can be scheduled, all the requirements from the thesis agreement have to be fulfilled. This in particular concerns the course work listed there. If this has not been done before, please make sure to discuss this with the DSPL soon after uploading the thesis. If the courses you completed do not exactly match the thesis agreement, it is a good idea to submit another progress report (using the form available via the link above) in which the requirements are changed accordingly.

Scheduling the defense; examiners: It is standard that the supervisor is one of the examiners for the defense and at least one of the referees should be present, too. Unless both referees can serve as examiners, it is good to discuss possible examiners with the DSPL well in advance. It is possible to get financial support for the participation of the referees in the defense. All examiners should at least be roughly familiar with the thesis. Before a defense can be scheduled, it has to be agreed with the referees that the reports will arrive two weeks before the planned date and all requirements from the thesis agreement also have to be

completed by this date. It is suggested to roughly discuss possible dates with the DSPL at least one month before the planned date. Then it is up to the student to coordinate possible dates with the DSPL and the examiners. (Of course, you may ask your advisor for help.)

The defense: Our current standard is to start the defense with a presentation of the candidate of 45 minutes. Then there is the opportunity for the audience to pose questions. The last part of the defense is a (public) examination on the thesis and its scientific surroundings by the examiners. So it may be good to inform referees that they will have to examine as a part of the defense. Apart from the meeting of the committee in which the mark for the defense is agreed on, the whole defense is public. The standard is to reserve a time-slot of two hours for the defense to be on the safe side.