



**Politecnico  
di Torino**

**ScuDo**

Scuola di Dottorato ~ Doctoral School

WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

## *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*

*regarding the extension of the PhD program duration and the  
organization of the final examination*

*Approved by the Doctoral School Council on June 19, 2025*

## *Extension of the duration of the doctoral program and organisation of the final examination*

### Introduction

In accordance with national regulations and Article 13 of the PhD Regulations, the PhD programs at Politecnico di Torino last three years, unless otherwise agreed in international partnerships or institutional agreements. If a PhD student has experienced suspension periods, the third-year end date is postponed by the corresponding duration.

Ministerial Decree 226/2021 (Article 36 of the University Regulations) allows for an extension of the PhD duration.

These guidelines describe procedures for requesting an extension, writing, evaluating, discussing, and publishing the PhD thesis, and organizing the final exam. Where projects are governed by international or collaborative agreements, those agreements take precedence.

### Extension of the PhD Program Duration

PhD students who cannot submit their thesis within the expected duration may request an extension through the digital platform “cruscotto”, at least **45 days before** the official program end (or 4 months for students in national doctoral programs hosted internally).

The Doctoral Board may grant an extension of up to **12 months**, without additional financial support unless proposed by the Board for justified scientific reasons.

The extension request must:

- Be submitted by the PhD student via “cruscotto”
- Be approved by the Supervisor, who evaluates scientific justification and available funding (if an extension of the scholarship is proposed)
- Be for a fixed term (3, 6, 9, or 12 months). A second request is allowed up to a 12-month total.

The Board will review requests in a meeting no later than 15 days before the official end of the cycle.

In the event of non-approval, the Academic Board records the reasons for the rejection in the meeting minutes.

After the Board meeting, the Coordinator enters the outcome into the system (“cruscotto”), including the reasons in case of refusal.

If approved, the system automatically updates the end dates of the PhD candidates' cycles, including any approved extension of the scholarship.

The enrollment procedures in cases of extension are defined by the Student Contribution Regulation for the relevant academic year.

### Admission to the Final Examination

As provided for by national legislation and Article 34 of the Regulation, the PhD degree is awarded on completion of the PhD course and following the positive evaluation of a research thesis, according to the procedure outlined below.

By the end of the cycle (or within any approved extension), the Doctoral Board must:

- Evaluate the student's academic and research performance
- Approve admission to the final examination based on:

- Thesis submission
- Minimum requirements in teaching (D) and research (R) activities (per Annex 1)

#### Steps for initiating the final exam:

a) By the end date, the PhD student uploads:

1. Thesis draft (Italian, English, or another language with approval)
2. English abstract (max 2 pages)
3. Summary report of the 3-year period

b) The Supervisor must:

- Validate the thesis (content and plagiarism check)
- Propose reviewers (after verifying availability)

c) The Coordinator must:

- Call a Board meeting to approve admission and reviewer list (within 2 weeks post cycle)

Only after these three steps are complete will the system allow the student to register for the final exam.

#### **Final Exam Registration**

Via the university portal, under “Career” → “Graduation and Final Exam”, the PhD student must:

1. Fill out the required forms
2. Pay the electronic stamp duty
3. Confirm successful registration via:
  - On-screen message
  - Email
  - Status check in the registration tab

The Supervisor collaborates with the doctoral candidate for the successful completion of the assessment procedure and, together with the Coordinator, is responsible for monitoring its progress.

In the period between the end of the cycle and the final examination, the candidate's status as a doctoral student is extended and he/she has access to the facilities necessary for the completion of his/her research activity.

If the Board of teachers considers that the research activity carried out is insufficient for the preparation of a doctoral thesis that contributes to the advancement of knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of investigation or that the minimum requirements cannot be achieved within the time limits, it declares the doctoral candidate **forfeited** from the doctorate.

## Thesis Evaluation Procedure

The doctoral thesis is evaluated by two reviewers, at least one of whom must be a university professor. These reviewers are selected from a list of **3 to 5 candidates**, approved by the Academic Board (or by the Coordinator, if delegated), and confirmed by the Coordinator in the “cruscotto” system. The selection follows a priority order indicated when entering the names.

When the list is generated, the system automatically sends the selected reviewers an **official invitation** to carry out the review, including all necessary information.

### Reviewer Profile

Reviewers of the doctoral thesis must:

- Be knowledgeable in the subject matter of the thesis;
- May be affiliated with foreign or international institutions;
- **Must not** be faculty at Politecnico di Torino or at any universities awarding the PhD, nor belong to the PhD program's Academic Board or any associated/partner institutions or funding bodies **directly involved** in the candidate's research;
- **Must not** have co-authored publications with the candidate within the past three years.

At least **one of the reviewers must be a university professor** (full professor, associate professor, tenure-track or confirmed researcher, including RTD/B and RTT positions, or equivalent in foreign institutions).

Reviewers **not affiliated with a university** or public research institution (either in Italy or abroad) must hold a PhD or a higher academic qualification.

It is permitted for a reviewer to be included in multiple reviewer lists.

**No compensation** is provided for reviewing doctoral theses.

Reviewers are invited by email and must **accept or decline within 7 days**. Upon acceptance, they agree to complete the review **within 30 days** of receiving the thesis via the online platform, using instructions provided in the invitation message. A **15-day extension** may be granted for justified reasons.

Reviewers must also agree to a **confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement** to protect any sensitive information in the thesis and declare any **absence of conflicts of interest**.

If a reviewer **declines** or **fails to complete the review** in time, they will be replaced by the next person on the list. All involved parties will be notified via email of the replacement.

Within 30 days of receiving the thesis, each reviewer provides a **written analytical assessment** via the platform, with one of the following outcomes:

- **"Accept"**: The thesis is admitted to the public defense without revisions;
- **"Minor revision"**: Minor changes are requested;
- **"Major revision"**: Substantial changes or additions are required, resulting in postponement.

If even **one reviewer** requests a **"Major revision"**, a second review is mandatory. The candidate then has **up to 6 months** from the date of both reviewers' feedback to revise the thesis and submit it again for evaluation by the same reviewers.

Following the second review, the thesis is **automatically admitted** to public defense, accompanied by a **new written opinion** from the reviewers.

If the thesis is accepted or **minor revisions** are requested, the candidate may make changes to the thesis and associated documents. These must be **revalidated by the Supervisor**, but **the thesis is not re-evaluated** by the reviewers.

Every version of the thesis uploaded to the “cruscotto”—whether for reviewer evaluation or the final discussion—must be **approved by the Supervisor**, including a **plagiarism check**.

## Final Examination

The final examination must take place within **90 days** from the receipt of the thesis evaluations by the reviewers, except in cases of objective and justified impediments.

The final exam consists of a **public presentation** by the PhD candidate, lasting approximately **40 minutes**, followed by a **discussion defending the research work**. The examination is conducted before an **Examination Committee**, composed as described below.

### Composition and Appointment of the Examination Committee

The Committee is composed of **three voting members** (official members), including the two reviewers who evaluated the thesis.

The number of members may be increased to **five** by resolution of the Academic Board. A five-member committee is **mandatory** if at least one of the reviewers issues a **negative evaluation**.

The composition of the Committee should, where possible, **ensure gender balance**.

At least **two-thirds (or three-fifths)** of the Committee members must be **university professors or tenured/tenure-track researchers** from public research institutions, either in Italy or abroad.

At least **two-thirds (or three-fifths)** of the members must be **external**. External members are defined as faculty or researchers from public research institutions, Italian or foreign, **not affiliated** with the Politecnico di Torino or any other university conferring the degree. They must also **not belong** to the PhD Academic Board or any partner/consortium/funding entities directly involved in the candidate’s research.

Committee members **not affiliated with universities or research institutions** must hold a **PhD** or an **equivalent or higher academic qualification**.

In addition to the official members, the Supervisor must propose **an alternate member**, from an academic institution external to Politecnico di Torino, in case a primary member is unavailable or withdraws.

The **Supervisor and Co-supervisors** of the candidate are included in the Committee **without voting rights**.

The Coordinator may propose the inclusion of additional **non-voting members** (“aggregated members”) from public or private research institutions, including those abroad.

**No member** of the Committee may have a **family or kinship relationship up to the fourth degree** with each other or with the candidate.

The **Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring all the above conditions are met for the composition of the Committee.

The **Chair** of the Committee must be an **internal member with voting rights**, in order to digitally sign the final report using university credentials.

Being a member of one Committee **does not preclude** participation in other Committees or acting as a reviewer for other theses.

Alongside the **approval of the final version** of the thesis, the Supervisor must enter into the "cruscotto" system the **names of the Committee members**, the **date, time, and location** of the exam at least **10 calendar days before** the scheduled exam date. These details must be confirmed by the Coordinator via the system.

The Committee is then officially **appointed by the Rector** through a formal decree. Notification of the appointment and access credentials for the evaluation platform are sent to the Committee members via email.

Immediately after the appointment, the Committee members can access the thesis, abstract, summary report, and the reviewers' evaluations through the **online evaluation platform**.

All members **external to Politecnico di Torino** must accept a **confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement** to protect sensitive information in the thesis and declare the **absence of any conflict of interest**.

Except in **exceptional cases** authorized by the Academic Board, the final exam must include the **physical presence of the candidate** before at least one member of the Examination Committee.

**External members** of the Committee may participate **via videoconference**, provided that:

- They can be identified with a valid ID
- They are able to follow the discussion and participate in real time
- They have access to all materials used during the exam

This option is also available to the **candidate and internal members**, but only in **justified exceptional cases** and with **prior approval** from the Academic Board.

For programs awarding **joint degrees**, the final exam may also be held at an institution other than Politecnico di Torino, and **all members** may participate via videoconference, **except for one**, who must be **physically present with the candidate** to ensure the proper conduct of the exam.

## Outcome and Degree Conferral

The thesis is approved or rejected based on majority vote. **Honors (cum laude)** can be awarded unanimously for outstanding scientific merit.

If the thesis is rejected, the exam cannot be retaken. Unjustified absence from the final exam leads to loss of PhD status unless justified within 30 days.

After passing the exam, the candidate must upload the final thesis to the university's open archive **Porto@IRIS**. The degree is awarded by the Rector(s) of the awarding institutions.

## Thesis Deposit and Publication

The final thesis (Creative Commons License CC BY) is:

- Deposited in the **National PhD Registry**
- Sent to **Rome and Florence National Libraries**

The candidate may request an **embargo of up to 12 months** in justified cases (e.g., confidentiality).

If published, the thesis must include a standard statement acknowledging it was submitted to earn a PhD at Politecnico di Torino or its joint program partners: *"Thesis discussed for the achievement of the title of PhD in ...., carried out at the PhD programme in ... of Politecnico di Torino / PhD. Programme in .... jointly organized by Politecnico di Torino and Università degli Studi di Torino/ Doctoral programme of national interest in ... of Politecnico di Torino and ...."*

