

# **PhD Thesis Defense**

## **Economics Department, UC3M**

### **1. Requirements of the thesis**

To be defended, the thesis should in principle consist of 3 different papers. At least 2 of the chapters should be at a level that they can be submitted to top field journals.

### **2. Internal Committee**

When the student and his/her PhD advisor believe the thesis is ready to be defended, they inform the Director of Graduate Studies. An internal committee of 3 people is then formed to evaluate the thesis. The composition of the committee is decided by the Director of Graduate Studies with input from the PhD advisor. The committee may include professors who are not on the faculty of the Department, but at least one of the three members should be a full-time faculty member of the Department. It tends to be a good idea if at least one member is from outside the university, since this helps for the formal defense.

The mission of the internal committee is to decide whether the thesis is ready to be defended in the internal thesis seminar of the Department. A reasonable benchmark is that the thesis should at least have two chapters that have a decent chance to be publishable in good field journals (so-called B journals in our ranking).

In its report, the committee has to choose between the following two options:

- a) If the committee believes the thesis is ready to be presented, then the report should give constructive comments and remarks that will help the student improve his/her work in the future. The report should end by explicitly stating "In the view of this committee, the thesis is ready to be presented to the Department".
- b) If the internal commission believes the thesis is not ready yet, it should provide a concrete list of points that the student should address before the thesis can be presented. This amounts to a revise & resubmit, i.e., the student has to resubmit, and the thesis cannot be defended until the committee explicitly states "In the view of this committee, the thesis is ready to be presented to the Department".

It is important to point out that the committee acts as gate keeper. That is, its mission is to avoid discussions about the quality of the thesis during the internal defense.

### **3. Defense in the Internal Thesis Seminar**

Once the internal committee has approved the thesis to be presented, the student has to defend his/her thesis in an internal thesis seminar in the Department of Economics.

At the time the thesis seminar is announced, the thesis is “deposited” in the Department for 15 days. This is a formal requirement. The Department informs the “Sección de Doctorado” about the “depósito” by writing to [tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es](mailto:tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es).

There needs to be a minimum of 10 PhDs present during the internal thesis seminar. This quorum does not include the thesis advisor, but it does include the members of the internal thesis committee. The student’s presentation should be in English, last about 50 minutes, and focus on the main contributions of the thesis. After the student’s presentation and a round of questions, the PhDs deliberate, and decide whether the student is ready for the formal defense.

### **4. Depositing the thesis**

The thesis then needs to be “deposited” in the Department for 15 days. This is a formal requirement. The Department informs the “Sección de Doctorado” about the “depósito” by writing to [tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es](mailto:tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es). Typically the thesis is deposited once it has been approved in the internal thesis seminar, but occasionally, in the interest of time, it can be deposited at the same time that the internal thesis seminar is announced.

### **5. Preparing for the Formal Defense**

After the internal defense and after the 15-day lag of the depositing has passed, a number of documents have to be handed in to CEAES (Office: 11.0.03. Contact person: Susana Yagüe). There are two types PhD degrees:

- A so-called International Thesis (“Mención Internacional”) for those students who satisfy the following criteria:
  - Stay of minimum 3 months in an institution outside Spain.
  - Two professors from outside Spain should write a very short evaluation of the thesis (Angelica has the “format” of the document that needs to be filled out)
  - One foreign professor (different from the supervisor of the 3-month stay) should be on the thesis defense.
- A standard PhD

[http://portal.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/postgrado\\_mast\\_doct/tesis\\_doctoral/presentacion\\_y\\_defensa](http://portal.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/postgrado_mast_doct/tesis_doctoral/presentacion_y_defensa)

You have to hand in all documents mentioned in 3.1-3.7.

Angélica can help out with this paperwork. There is a draft English translation of the above links that Angelica can provide you with.

One important document relates to the composition of the committee for the formal defense. This committee is set up by the student's PhD advisor (after consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies). The committee should consist of 3 people ("titulares") and 1 substitute ("suplente"). In most cases the substitute is not used, but it tends to be a good idea to choose substitutes who are in the Madrid area. The majority of the committee members must be from outside UC3M ("externos"), i.e., at most one member can belong to the University ("interno"). Note that "visiting professors" are considered to be "internos", while Professors with a "Santander Chair of Excellence" are considered to be "externos". Also note that, in case there is one "titular" from UC3M, the "suplente" must be from outside UC3M in case the "interno" fails. All members must have a PhD and should have research experience (i.e., have at least one "sexenio", or having participated in a competitive research project with public financing, or having directed a PhD thesis). See the files "Propuesta de Tribunal" and "Ficha datos miembros de Tribunal" (which needs to be filled out by each member of the committee).

Once all papers have been handed in, the Comisión de Doctorado of UC3M has to approve the composition of the committee. Note that the Comisión de Doctorado meets about once a month (you can check of the dates of the meetings of the Comisión de Doctorado at [http://www.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/postgrado\\_mast\\_doct/doctorados/Reuniones\\_Comision\\_Doctorado](http://www.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/postgrado_mast_doct/doctorados/Reuniones_Comision_Doctorado)). Further take into account that the month of August does not count. The Comisión will nominate one of the members of the committee as president and another as secretary.

Once the Comisión de Doctorado has approved the committee, the secretary of the committee has to communicate the date of the formal defense at least 15 days in advance to the Sección de Doctorado ([tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es](mailto:tesis@ceaes.uc3m.es)).

## **6. Formal Defense**

The formal defense is then organized by CEAES (room, invitation, paperwork, reimbursement of travels of the committee members,...)