

Guidelines for PH.D Examinations in the Department of Earth Sciences, ETH Zurich

(Rules decided at the Department Conference of June 5th 2007)

1. The oral doctoral presentation may be announced once the Chair of the Supervisory Committee and the other committee members have each confirmed by e-mail to the Study Administration Office no later than 10 working days before the defence, that they are able to attend the defence on the agreed day and time. The referee and co-referee must indicate by email to the Study Administration Office whether or not the thesis is acceptable at least 3 days prior to scheduled defence. The referee and the co-referees must submit their original and signed reports to the defence Chairperson (Vorsitzender) or to the Study Administration Office prior to the oral examination. The Chairperson should consult with the pro-rector in case of any problem. The Chairperson should promptly after the defence send the signed, original reports to the Study Administration Office.
2. The oral presentation is public.
The Chairperson may ask for limiting the audience to members with doctoral title only.
3. The oral examination must last at least one hour and consists of:
 - A presentation by the candidate, which lasts a maximum of 30 minutes (summary of the doctoral thesis results)
 - An oral examination, lasting at least 30 minutes, during which the examiners raise questions dealing with the dissertation subject and obtain answers from the candidate. The traditional order: Referee, First Co-referee, second Co-referee etc. may be changed if agreed among members of the committee. The Chairperson may participate to the questioning.
 - After questioning by the members of the thesis committee, the Chairperson offers to other doctor-members of the faculty and subsequently other present scientists with a PhD-degree to raise critical questions on the dissertation topic. The chairperson may exclude answers to these questions from being taken into consideration in the evaluation of the oral examination
4. At the end of this oral examination all members of the faculty are invited to join the thesis committee to discuss the thesis defence. All other attendants must leave the room, along with the candidate.
5. The Committee and the other members of the Earth Sciences teacher's conference share their assessment of both the dissertation and oral examination. Ultimately the Committee alone decides whether the candidate passed the oral examination and whether the work deserves an "Auszeichnung" (limited to the top 5% theses). The Chairperson is not entitled to vote, unless he has to provide the decisive vote in case of unresolved assessment.
6. The doctoral candidate is called in the examination room where the Chairperson of the Examination Committee notifies the committee decision (passed or not).