

	Guideline	Doctoral Studies
	Applicable to jury proposals submitted to the doctoral school from 14/06/2024	
	Version of 14/06/2024 Modified in the CED Council on 13/06/2024	
Jury and thesis defense: rules and recommendations		

The purpose of this document is to apply Articles 18 and 19 of the ministerial Decree of May 25, 2016 within UGA, which concern the thesis jury and the conditions of thesis defense, and of the Decree of October 27, 2020 on the use of videoconferencing for presenting work as part of an accreditation to direct research (HDR) or a thesis defense, and the Decree of August 26, 2022 modifying the Decree of May 2016.

I. Choice of external referees (rapporteurs)

The two external referees must be accredited to direct research with a habilitation (HDR), or have the equivalent of an HDR⁽¹⁾, affiliated to an institution outside UGA, the laboratory, and the doctoral school in which the PhD student is enrolled; and must not be involved in the thesis (no involvement in the scientific supervision of the thesis and no joint publication with the PhD student). In the case of co-supervision, they cannot belong to the establishments that signed the agreement unless there is a specific clause in the agreement. It is possible that the external referees are not be part of the thesis defense jury.

II. Rules for thesis defense jury composition

Members

1. The jury must consist of at least 4 members and no more than 8 (including the thesis supervisor). At least half of the jury members must come from outside the PhD student's institution, the affiliated organizations, the research unit in which the doctorate was studied and the doctoral school, and at least half must be University Professors (PR) or Associate Professors (PRA).⁽²⁾ At least three jury members must take part in the decision: the thesis supervisor and any other person helping to supervise the thesis may not take part in the decision.
2. The jury must include at least one member with the status of professor in a higher education institution allowed to grant PhDs in France or its equivalent in a foreign university.
3. An individual who has a PhD but who does not work in academia may serve as a member of the jury. If they do not hold a PhD themselves, this person may only take part in the defense as an invited member. Exceptions are possible on the condition that they are not involved in the thesis. These exceptions require the individual's full CV and a detailed justification by the thesis supervisor.
4. Except in special cases, thesis co-supervisors⁽⁵⁾ may only attend the thesis defense as invited members. Their role in the supervision team during the preparation of the thesis must be stated

on the thesis cover and in any communication related to the defense. They are not counted as members of the jury and therefore not included in the ratios. The jury chairperson may invite them to speak at the thesis defense.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a jury includes at least one UGA research professor, either a University lecturer with a HDR (accreditation to direct research) or a full university professor, who was not involved in supervising the thesis.
- It is highly recommended that a jury of at least 5 members (including the thesis supervisor) be formed with at least 3 external members and 3 University Professors or Associate Professors.

Local to external member ratio

5. At least half the jury must be external members, i.e., not affiliated with a Grenoble Alpes site institution or doctoral school and not involved in the thesis.
6. If the thesis supervisor or co-supervisor is a member of the thesis jury, they are considered as local members of the jury.
7. A thesis co-supervisor⁽⁵⁾ affiliated with an organization outside the Grenoble site and the doctoral school may be a member of the thesis jury. They are considered as local members of the jury.
8. An individual who does not work in academia (even in Grenoble) is considered as an external member if they are not involved in the thesis.

Associate Professor/non-Associate Professor Ratio

9. At least half of the jury must consist of University Professors or Associate Professors. Professors and researchers on secondment from their parent institution are not included in the 50% quota of University Professors or Associate Professors and may not be chairpersons of the PhD defense jury, except when they are on secondment to an institution whose members are equivalent to University Professors. The specific case of personnel from institutions with which the UGA has signed agreements is covered by point 14 below.
10. An emeritus member (University Professor, Doctor or Senior Lecturer) can invoke their habilitation (accreditation to direct research, HDR or equivalent) to be an external referee (rapporteur) or examiner for a thesis. However, they cannot use their University Professor or Associate Professor rank. Consequently, they cannot chair the jury.
11. An honorary or retired professor may serve as an examiner on a jury, but may not serve as an external referee (rapporteur) or jury chairperson.

Special cases

12. A brief CV (notably mentioning thesis supervisions and the exact academic title in the country of practice⁽⁴⁾) is requested for each non-French individual or each individual chosen for their expertise outside the academic world in order to assess their status on the jury.
13. Following the cooperation agreement between UGA and CEA dated July 15, 2020 and the creation of RD status by CEA (generation instruction note 739 of 7/6/2021), the CEA Research Directors (RDs) belonging to the research units listed in this convention or having been granted Associate

Professor equivalency as part of an agreement with another doctorate-granting higher education institution in France are considered as the rank of Associate Professors.

Chair

15. The chairperson of the jury must be a University Professor or Associate Professor and a member of a University, a UMR research lab or a French EPST (Public Scientific and Technical Research Establishment). They cannot be a supervisor of the thesis.

III. Gender parity

Jury composition must ensure a balanced representation of women and men (Art. 18 of the May 2016 Decree). Since this balance can be difficult to achieve in certain disciplines, a reasonable expectation is that there will be at least one woman and one man on each jury.

A regular assessment will be made to identify any breaches and to ensure that gender representation on juries is statistically comparable to that of the relevant CNU (French National Council of Universities) sections.

IV. Co-supervised theses

The above rules can be relaxed for co-supervised theses. The proportion of external members can be lower (at least 1/3). However, except in very specific cases mentioned in the agreement, the rules concerning the external referees (2 external referees accredited to direct research (HDR) or equivalent) and the proportion of University Professors or Associate Professors must be respected. In the case of co-supervision, a supervisor or co-supervisor from the partner university is considered a local member.

V. Use of videoconferencing

The use of videoconferencing is governed by Article 2 of the Decree of October 27, 2020.

"By way of exception, the president or director of the institution, after consulting the director of the doctoral school and at the suggestion of the thesis supervisor, may authorize the PhD student and the members of the jury, in whole or in part, to participate in the thesis defense by any telecommunication means that ensures their identification and guarantees their effective, continuous and simultaneous participation in the debates as well as the confidentiality of the jury's deliberations. The technical means used must ensure that the debates are public."

The request for full videoconferencing will be made at the time of submission of the defense dossier via the designated form.

In case of partial videoconferencing (to be mentioned on the jury proposal form), it should be noted that the jury chairperson and the PhD student must be physically in the same room.

The same rules apply for HDR (accredited to direct research) juries.

VI. Deliberation

The deliberation must be conducted in two stages:

- The first, during which all jury members may contribute additional useful elements.
- The second, during which the thesis supervisors may be invited by the jury chairperson to leave the deliberation room or, if they are allowed to stay, to refrain from participating in the final decision to award the PhD.

These rules will be attached to the defense dossier for submission to the jury chairperson, who will lead the discussions in the manner they deem appropriate.

VII. Thesis defense minutes and report signatures

1. The thesis defense record is signed by all members of the jury with the exception of the thesis supervisor(s).
2. The thesis defense report is signed by all jury members. The report should include the following statement: "The admissibility decision was taken by the members of the jury, excluding the thesis supervisors, invited supervisors and invited members, who were not deliberating".
3. Invited members do not sign the thesis defense record or the report.
4. When videoconferencing was used by a jury member, the chairperson indicates on the thesis defense record "Videoconference" and signs in the remote jury member's place, "P.O. Mr./Ms. X". As for the thesis defense report, the chairperson signs, "P.O. Mr./Ms. X". The request to participate in the jury by videoconference must be made before the defense and attached to the defense record. The signatures "P.O. Mr./Ms. X" have the same value as the signatures of the members present.
5. A jury member who is absent during the defense (without videoconference) does not sign the thesis defense record or the report. The Chairperson notes "Absent" on the thesis defense record.
6. Any handwritten modification of the jury members' positions, ranks or addresses is strictly forbidden. ⁽⁶⁾
7. The thesis defense record must clearly state the place and time of the defense.

VIII. Jury member absence management.

General rule: preference should be given to the use of videoconferencing, within the limits set out in paragraph V.

Thesis defense jury member absence without access to videoconferencing:

1. Provided the constraints of the jury's validity are still respected, the defense can take place. The absent members are declared as such on the defense record and do not sign the record.
2. If the jury is no longer valid due to declared absences, and if time permits, its composition can be modified to re-establish its validity. The new composition must be submitted to the doctoral school for validation as soon as possible, and the new defense record must be issued for signature at the end of the thesis defense.
3. If the unexpected absence of a jury member is declared shortly before the defense without the possibility of replacing them to ensure the validity of the jury, participation in the defense by telephone is permissible. The president will apply the same procedure as in the case of a videoconference.
4. If a telephone solution is not possible in the above situation, the thesis defense must be postponed.

Examples of jury composition are provided in Appendix 2.

IX. Taking the oath

After the defense, in the case of a successful defense, the doctor takes an oath individually to commit to respect the principles and requirements of scientific integrity in the course of their professional career, whatever the sector or field of activity. The oath procedure and text is specified in the doctoral charter.

FOOTNOTES

(1)

- a. The HDR (habilitation; accreditation to direct research) equivalence for a non-French research professor is acquired by default for international colleagues whose functions are equivalent to University Professors ("Arrêté du 10/2/2011" document). A CV indicating the exact status and the record of research and PhD supervision activities of these colleagues is required when compiling the defense dossier.
- b. For colleagues who do not fall into this category: Assessment of the legitimacy of a non-French colleague to be an external referee for a thesis must be analyzed by the HDR committee of the relevant doctoral school. They are best able to determine the relevance of the colleague's file to the requirements for being authorized to defend an HDR within this doctoral school.

Criteria that can be used as a basis for analysis include:

- A decade of experience in R&D,
- Good publication record
- Experience in PhD supervision, e.g., through publications with PhD students.
- Relevance of experience in the specific field related to the thesis

- (2) The status of University Professor or equivalent (Associate Professor) for a PhD thesis defense jury at the Université Grenoble-Alpes is defined according to the Decree of June 15, 1992.
- (3) In the meaning of Decree n°92-70 of January 16, 1992 concerning the French National Council of Universities
- (4) For non-French individuals: exact title in the language of origin and equivalence in accordance with the Decree of February 10, 2011.
- (5) The status of thesis Director or co-director can only be given to a University Professor or equivalent, to a person holding the HDR accreditation to direct research, or benefiting from a specific dispensation granted by the Commission des Dispenses et Dérogations Doctorales (CD3) after approval by the PhD student's doctoral school HDR committee, and validated by the Academic Council's research commission (article 16 of the Decree of May 25, 2016). Any person supervising the thesis who does not meet these conditions is considered a co-supervisor.
- (6) In the event of an error in the names, positions, ranks or addresses of one or more jury members, the chairperson may request a correction on a separate slip. A change in the rank or position of a jury member may lead to the validity of the jury being called into question.

Appendix 1: List of regulatory texts used to draft this document

- Decree n°84-431 of June 6, 1984 determining the common statutory provisions applicable to research professors and establishing the special status of the body of university professors and the body of lecturers.
- Decree n°92-70 of January 16, 1992 concerning the French National Council of Universities
- Decree of June 15, 1992 determining the list of civil servants assimilated to university professors and lecturers for the designation of members of the French National Council of Universities
- Decree of February 10, 2011 concerning the equivalence scale of titles, works and positions of research professors mentioned in articles 22 and 43 of decree n° 84-431 of June 6, 1984 setting the common statutory provisions applicable to research professors and laying down the special status of the body of university professors and the body of lecturers
- Decree of August 26, 2022 amending the decree of May 25, 2016 establishing the national framework for studies and the procedures leading to the awarding of the national doctoral degree
- Decree of October 27, 2020 concerning the use of videoconferencing for the presentation of work in the context of an accreditation to direct research and a thesis defense

Appendix 2: Examples of jury composition

Example 1: A standard jury with five members including the thesis supervisor. There are therefore at least three external members and three University Professors or Associate Professors. If an external member is absent, the jury will remain valid with four members, including two external members and at least two University Professors or Associate Professors.

Example 2: A jury with six (eight) members including three (four) external members. If an external member is absent, an internal member (for example, the thesis supervisor) must withdraw from the jury. The condition concerning University Professors or equivalent must be fulfilled.

Example 3: A jury with four members, two of whom are external. If an external member is absent (even an external referee - rapporteur), the defense is postponed. If an internal member is absent, they can be replaced at short notice by another internal member, subject to the agreement of the director of the doctoral school and the balance between University Professors and Associate Professors.