

General Procedure for the Workplace Defense (Internal Defense) of PhD Dissertations¹

1. General Provisions

Prior to submission, the student is required to present their PhD thesis at an internal (workplace) defence. Before this defense, the dissertation and the theses are reviewed by two opponents appointed by the supervisor. During the internal defense, the student is obliged to respond to the reviewers' reports. The internal defense is held at the department of BME VBK where the Candidate conducted their PhD research. This requirement also applies to Candidates who carried out their PhD research at an external workplace. In such cases, the defense must be held at the department of the internal consultant; however, this may be deviated from at the supervisor's request, provided there are appropriate professional reasons and the agreement of all departments concerned. If an internal defense is also required at the partner institution, the Department will do its best to coordinate the two procedures in accordance with the regulations. The publicity of the workplace debate must be ensured as broadly as possible (e.g. through announcements to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, relevant professional committees); this is in the interest of and the responsibility of both the Candidate and the supervisor.

2. Process of Organizing the Workplace Defense

2.1. Responsibilities of the Candidate

If, in the opinion of the supervisor (and the internal consultant), the working copy of the dissertation is suitable for the workplace defense, the Candidate contacts the Chairman of the workplace defense committee, appointed by the head of department, informs the Chairman of their intention to hold their internal defense, and sends them the manuscript of the dissertation.

At this point, the Chairman outlines the substantive and formal requirements for conducting the internal defense (procedure, duration of the oral presentation, presentation format, rules of the debate, specific departmental requirements, etc.). Once the defense date has been determined, the Candidate is responsible for arranging the venue of the debate (e.g. the Department library, the Schay Room, or another suitable faculty classroom). The Candidate must also ensure the availability of the technical equipment to be used for the presentation (including platforms and tools for online or hybrid defenses), prepare the attendance sheet (with header including name, workplace, academic degree, and signature), and appoint someone who would be responsible for filling out the Minutes of the internal defense.

2.2. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

With the help of the supervisor, the Chairman decides on the persons of the two preliminary reviewers (experts holding a PhD degree obtained at least two years earlier; at least one of them may be an external institutional or industrial researcher, must be independent from the Candidate's research activities). The Chairman is responsible for inviting the preliminary reviewers. After the reviews have been received and following consultations among the supervisor, the reviewers, and the Head of department, the Chairman designates the final date of the workplace debate and issues the official invitation at least 10 days before the event. In the case of an external Candidate, the local workplace manager of the partner institution must also be involved in scheduling. The Chairman is responsible for deciding when and to whom the invitation should be sent (invitations may be sent, for example, to department's

teaching/research staff and, where relevant, to professional committees, partner institution researchers, etc).

3. Documents of the Workplace Defense, Recommendations

3.1. Working Copy of the Dissertation

The Candidate should strive to prepare the manuscript in compliance with the formal and substantive requirements of the final version (editing, style, language accuracy, chemical nomenclature, length, etc.). Care should be taken to ensure clear wording and precise references to data in figures and tables.

The manuscript must clearly indicate which parts of the results represent the Candidate's own work that underpin the PhD thesis statements. It is essential that the thesis booklet containing the thesis points be included in the manuscript submission.

3.2. Review and Response

3.2.1.

The primary task of the preliminary reviewers is to assist the Candidate in producing the highest possible quality version of their dissertation and to point out any of its weaknesses. They must also state whether the scientific results presented in the dissertation are sufficient for obtaining a doctoral degree, and whether the dissertation may be submitted for the final review stage following the implementation of the corrections and modifications proposed in the review.

If the reviewer does not consider the dissertation suitable for submission, they must state whether this is due to the insufficient quantity or quality of the work performed, or due to numerous deficiencies in the compilation of the dissertation.

In the substantive review, the reviewer should briefly evaluate the new scientific results, address issues related to the structure and editing of the manuscript, and state whether they accept the thesis statements (and the thesis booklet). The reviewer should raise questions regarding the presented results and, where necessary, request clarification regarding wording, statements, figures, or tables.

Typographical errors, minor inaccuracies, and misprints should preferably be communicated to the Candidate in a separate document; these need not be discussed in detail during the defense. The Candidate's responses to the substantive questions raised in the review play an important role in the evaluation of the Candidate's performance (and thus in the assessment of whether the dissertation may be submitted).

3.2.2.

After receiving the reviews and following the necessary consultations, the Candidate begins organizing the workplace defense for the date set by the Chairman. In addition, the Candidate provides written responses to the questions and comments raised in the reviews. These responses (in electronic form) must be sent to the Chairman and the reviewers at least three days before the workplace debate.

During the debate, the reviewers state whether they accept the responses. In exceptional cases, the workplace debate may be conducted in the presence of only one reviewer, provided that the other reviewer submits a written statement accepting the responses received and continuing to support the submission of the dissertation. In the absence of such a statement,

the workplace debate may not be conducted without the reviewer's presence. Later, when submitting the final version of the dissertation, the Candidate must attach a Declaration specifying item by item where changes were made to the dissertation based on the reviews and the comments made during the debate, and—together with justification—which suggestions were rejected.

3.3. Presentation

The Candidate presents the literature background and results of their research work in a free oral presentation of the duration defined by the Chairman (preferably 20 minutes, in accordance with the requirements of the György Oláh Doctoral School), adequately documented with figures.

3.4. Attendance Sheet

For the Doctoral Council, in addition to the reviewers' opinions, it is helpful for the substantive evaluation of the Candidate's results and for the decision authorizing the continuation of the doctoral procedure if a sufficient number² of qualified experts participated in the debate, as documented by the attendance sheet.

3.5. Minutes

This document records the questions, answers, and opinions raised during the defense. At the end of the debate, the Chairman evaluates the Candidate's results and submits their proposal regarding acceptance or rejection of the dissertation for a vote. The outcome of this vote concludes the Minutes. The Chairman collects the draft Minutes from the Minute-taker, reviews and corrects them as necessary, and then authenticates them with their signature.

4. Further Responsibilities of the Candidate

After a successful workplace debate, the doctoral procedure continues with the submission of the final version of the dissertation in accordance with the regulations of the György Oláh Doctoral School. One copy of the internal defense documents (3.4 Attendance Sheet, 3.5 Minutes) must be attached.

In addition, a Declaration must be attached in which the Candidate specifies item by item where changes were made to the dissertation based on the reviews and the comments made during the debate. If the Candidate does not agree with a proposed change, they must justify in the Declaration why the change was not implemented.

Responsible departmental contact:

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Department of Physical Chemistry and Materials Science

Dr. Hessz Dóra, hessz.dora@vbk.bme.hu (Spectroscopy Laboratory)

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¹ According to the George A. Oláh Doctoral School Rules of Operation: The minutes of the in-house defence conducted at any BME faculty must be presented, displaying the result of the vote in favour of the submission of the thesis. There is also an attached appendix with all the modifications made on the basis of the review suggestions mentioned during the in-house defence.

² The George A. Oláh Doctoral School Rules of Operation does not prescribe a fixed number as to the minimum number of attendees at an internal defense. However, the HBDT reviews all the documents associated with the internal defense and the attendance of a large number of PhD title holders who recommend the thesis for the final submission will have a positive influence on the HBDT's decision.