



GUIDELINES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE PHD TITLE

CYCLE XXXVII REGULAR AND CYCLE XXXVII PON

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INTRODUCTION

PhD Students who have completed their research by achieving results judged to be of significant scientific value are admitted, at the end of the third year of the course, to the **Final Examination procedure** which, following the positive evaluation of the thesis by at least two external assessors, leads to the **discussion of the PhD Thesis**.

In the case of positive evaluation (A) and minor revisions (B) the Academic Board shall admit the PhD Student to carry out the Final Examination in the first available session; in the case of major revisions (C) the Academic Board may decide a 6 months postponement, exclusively for regular PhD Students.

The candidate who passes the Final Examination is awarded the PhD title and is granted the diploma. Cycle 37 PhD Courses are regulated by Ministerial Decree 45/2013 and by the Regulations of the University of Ferrara on the subject of Research Doctorates issued by R.D. Rep. no. 798/2013 and subsequent amendments.

In the final months of the third year, PhD students are required to complete the [annual final report](#) and send it by e-mail to the Coordinator, and in carbon copy to their Supervisor and Co-Supervisor.

PON PhD students must also complete the [annual report on their activities](#), according to the forms provided by MUR.

Those who meet the requirements for the [Doctor Europaeus](#) and wish to obtain the aforementioned additional certification are required to indicate it to the Coordinator when sending the final report, firstly for the correct identification of the Referees and, secondly, for the relative arrangement of the Examining Commission.

PhD students admitted to the Final Examination procedure are those who **have completed the 36 months** established for the conclusion of the course.

Any periods of [suspension](#), duly authorised and within the limits of the regulations, must be caught up.

In these cases, the interested parties are invited to contact the IUSS Office to know their individual schedule.

THE ACTOR – WHO DOES WHAT

PhD Student/PON PhD Student

- They compile and transmit electronically to their Coordinator, in carbon copy to their Supervisor, the annual final report on the research carried out during the third year (N.B. moreover the PON PhD student must also transmit the annual report on the activity carried out, according to the forms provided by the MUR);
- After the official communication, they transmit the thesis to the Referee (in carbon copy to the Coordinator and possibly to their Supervisor), together with the abstract (in English or Italian) and the *activities report* of the activities carried out during the PhD and any possible



publications;

- Within 15 days from the Final Examination, they finalise the application for the degree attainment on 'studiare.unife.it' and send the Thesis in PDF/A format to the effective and expert members of the Commission; send the required documents to the IUSS Office;
- PON PhD Students (as better specified in the appropriate section) use the forms provided by MUR regarding the activity report and the references to the financial support received from the PON REACT-EU programme, within the Thesis.

Academic Board

- Evaluates the activities of PhD Students in their third year and authorises the submission of Theses to the Referees;
- Appoints at least 2 Referees for each PhD Student;
- Following the evaluations received, authorises the Final Examination of PhD Students, indicating a possible 6-month postponement (regular PhD Students) for further Thesis revision;
- Appoints the Final Examination Commission for all PhD Students in the Cycle.

Referees

At least two Referees, appointed by the Academic Board, are assigned to each PhD Student by the end of the course.

The Referees, suggested by the Tutor and the Coordinator to the Academic Board, may be:

- Professors, belonging to Italian or foreign university institutions, external to the Academic Board and to the agreed subjects;
- Highly qualified experts, belonging to research institutions, public or private, Italian or foreign, not affiliated with the University.

For those wishing to obtain the additional certification of Doctor Europaeus, the Referees must be highly qualified Lecturers or Experts belonging to foreign university institutions in two different EU countries (Italy excluded).

Referees are required to fill in the *Thesis Evaluation Form*, according to the deadlines established and reported in the official appointment email sent by the IUSS Office.

IUSS Office

- It sends official communications to PhD Students (indicating the names of the Referees and the Thesis submission deadline) and to the Referees (indicating the name of the PhD Student to be evaluated, the deadlines to be met and attaching the assessment document 'Thesis Evaluation Form');
- Following the receipt of the evaluations and the consequent decision of admission to the Final Examination by the Academic Board, it sends the in appeal-PhD Students the date and Commission Members of the Final Examination, together with information to carry out the online procedure for the degree attainment, through the private area studio.unife.it.
N.B. The IUSS Office can enter the appeal only if the date of the Final Examination is known and officially communicated by the Academic Board through the Minutes.
- Send the appointment of the Final Examination Commission to the members of the commissions, attaching the Rectoral Decree of appointment.
- Following the receipt of the Final Examination Commission Minutes, the IUSS Office registers



the Final Examination and closes the career. It then sends a communication to the Research Doctor, who will be able to download the self-certification in Italian for Public Administrations from their Private Area of studio.unife.it or ask the IUSS Office for a certificate of title attainment in Italian or English for private institutions at the cost of 16 €.

The company in charge of the printing delivers the parchment, the cost of which is paid by the PhD Student during the degree attainment procedure on studiare.unife.it, directly to the IUSS Office, which will notify the PhD Students. The timing of receipt of the parchments does not depend on the IUSS Office. The Research Doctor can collect it personally/by means of a delegated person or request shipment by courier to the IUSS Office, filling in the necessary documentation.

Examining Commission

In accordance with the [Doctorate Regulations](#) (valid until Cycle XXXVII), the Commission is composed of three members chosen from among tenured university professors and researchers, at least two of whom must be tenured professors, specifically qualified in the disciplines pertaining to the scientific-disciplinary sectors to which the Course refers. At least one member must be from the University of Ferrara. The Commission may be supplemented by no more than two experts belonging to public and private research institutions, including foreign ones, provided that they are external to the University of Ferrara.

Exclusively in the case of Doctorate Courses divided into curricula, the Academic Board may request the Rector to constitute several Examining Commissions, composed of Professors and, if necessary, of external experts particularly competent in the disciplinary fields to which the individual curricula are more specifically related. In such cases, the qualification awarded may make explicit reference to the relevant curriculum.

The presidency of the Examining Commission is entrusted to the highest-ranking professor with the greatest seniority in the role, and in the event of equal seniority in the role, to the most senior in age.

The Examining Commission for the Final Examination is appointed by the Rector by decree, upon proposal of the Academic Board.

Commissioners from other locations may be reimbursed if they have to travel physically to the University of Ferrara to carry out the Final Examination, using the appropriate forms provided by the IUSS Office at the time of convocation.

It is possible, for commissioners from other locations, to participate online in the Final Examination, provided that there is at least one member in attendance together with the PhD Students in the appeal.

At the end of the discussion, the Thesis is approved or rejected with reasoned written judgment, without the attribution of a mark. The Commission, by unanimous vote, may award honours in presence of particularly significant scientific results.

In the event of a negative judgement, the PhD Student forfeits their status and loses the right to discuss the Thesis again.

The Commission shall indicate whether or not the PhD Student passed the Final Examination.



DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO REFEREES

In accordance with the procedures established in D.M. 45/2013 and the regulations of the University of Ferrara on PhD programmes (issued by D.R. Rep. no. 798/2013 and subsequent amendments), the documents to submit to the Referees, and in carbon copy to the Coordinator of the PhD Course and ideally to the Supervisor, are: the **Thesis** in PDF/A format, an **abstract** and a **report** on the activities carried out during the PhD programme and any publications.

Thesis

The Thesis must be sent by PhD Students (unsigned) directly to each Referee, having care to insert in carbon copy the Coordinator and ideally the Supervisor.

Please send a separate email for each Referee. It is recommended to send the above e-mails only after receiving the official communication from the IUSS Office.

The final Thesis is to be uploaded in [PDF/A](#) format (unsigned) on the platform studiare.unife.it within 15 days from the Final Examination and it also must be sent by e-mail, together with the [required documentation](#), to the IUSS Office.

From Cycle XXXVII the delivery of the paper Thesis is no longer required.

The specifications concerning the writing of the Thesis are available at the [following page](#).

The frontispieces to be used are sent by the IUSS Office and are also available at the [related page](#).

PON PhD Students must include evidence of the financial support received from the PON REACT-EU programme, through a appropriate specification within the Thesis:

- [Frontispiece of PON Doctoral Thesis in Italian](#) or [Frontispiece of PON Doctoral Thesis in English](#)
- [Last page format of PON Doctoral Thesis](#).

Abstract

The abstract to submit to the Referees and to be possibly included within the Thesis has no minimum or maximum number of characters, unlike the abstract to enter within the studiare.unife.it platform at the moment of the degree attainment procedure (4000 characters, including spaces).

Activity Report

The *activity report* is a short text (1-2 pages in Italian or English), in which the PhD Student presents themselves to the Referees, indicating the main research activities carried out and anything else they deem noteworthy (publications, foreign mobility, use of instruments, patents, etc.). No facsimile is provided, but it is advisable to use the letterhead of their own Department/University.



EVALUATION

Referees are required to express an analytical judgement on the Thesis in written form, within the date established by these Guidelines.

The judgement must be expressed by the Referees exclusively through a special format (*Thesis Evaluation Form*) and must be sent electronically to the Coordinator, and in carbon copy to the IUSS Office (dottorato@unife.it).

The Thesis Evaluation Form should preferably be written by the Evaluators in English, except for specific exceptions (e.g. Doctorate Course in European Union Law and National Systems whose evaluation may be expressed in Italian).

The evaluation options indicated in the *Thesis Evaluation Form* are as follows:

- A) The Thesis is admitted directly to the Final Examination without change;
- B) The Thesis is admitted directly to the Final Examination, but the quality must be improved through minor revisions (indicated). No re-submission to the Referees is necessary.
- C) The Thesis is not admitted directly to the Final Examination, because the quality needs to be improved through more (indicated) revisions. It must be resubmitted to the Referees after 6 months.

N.B. For PON PhD Students, the thesis is still admitted to the Final Examination, regardless of whether the Referees have given indications of major revisions (C).

Therefore, a new submission of the Thesis to the Referees is not expected after 6 months, but PON PhD students take the Final Examination directly at the first available session.

The Thesis Evaluation Form must be signed and dated by the Referees. Please report any discrepancies to the IUSS Office.



FINAL EXAM DEADLINES CYCLE XXXVII

Duration **36 months**: PhD finishes on 31 October 2024

NB: PhD Students wishing to apply to Italian INPS for Unemployment benefits (DIS-COLL) are invited to send an e-mail to the IUSS Office after 1 November 2024. The Office will send the PhD Student the dedicated certificate, exempt from tax stamp. It is not possible to issue this certificate before the end date of the PhD Course (36 months).

Time/deadline	Action	Actor
Within 10/10/2024	Electronic transmission to their Coordinator, with the Supervisor in carbon copy, the annual final report of the research carried out during the 3 rd year. The PhD Student, in the same communication, must also indicate to the Coordinator the contacts of the Referees identified by the Supervisor.	PhD Students
Within 30/10/2024	Meeting of the Academic Board, which in the Minutes shall EXPLICITLY certify: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the judgement on the overall activity carried out by the PhD Student by approving the Annual Report of the 3rd year;admission of the Thesis to the Referees' evaluation;appointment of the chosen Referees indicating '<i>Name, Surname, Institution and official email</i>' of each Referee.	Academic Board
Within 26/11/2024	Sending of the official communication to the PhD Students and Referees approved by the PhD Board.	IUSS Office
Within 30/11/2024	Transmission of the Theses to the Referees (in carbon copy to the Coordinator and ideally to the Supervisor), together with the abstract and the report on the activities carried out during the PhD Course and any publications.	PhD Students
Within 10/01/2025	Transmission of written analytical evaluation on the specific form (<i>Thesis Evaluation Form</i>) on the Thesis to the Coordinator and to the IUSS Office.	Referees
Within 20/01/2025	Transmission of evaluations to Candidates and possibly to Tutors.	Coordinator
Within 30/01/2025	Meeting of the Academic Board, which in the Minutes must EXPLICITLY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">deliberate on the evaluations received from the Referees with respect to each PhD Student;approve the admission to the first session of the Final Examination and deliberate on the possible postponement of 6 months for major revisions (see <i>calendar below</i>)*;	Academic Board



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">appoint the Final Examination Commission Cycle XXXVII, on the appropriate form provided by the IUSS Office, indicating the date of the examination.	
Within 14/02/2025	Rectoral Decrees, sending out of convocations to Final Examination Commissions.	IUSS Office
Following the Minute of the Academic Board	Opening of the exam appeal and consequent sending of information on the degree attainment to PhD Students on the platform studiare.unife.it .	IUSS Office
Within 15 days before the Final Examination	Finalisation of the application for the degree attainment on studiare.unife.it and sending of the Thesis in PDF/A to the effective and expert members of the Commission and sending of the required documents to the IUSS Office.	PhD Students
From 17/02 to 30/04/2025	First session of Final Examinations in case the PhD Students are admitted directly to the Final Exam.	Examining Commission

Otherwise:

*In case of a decision by the Academic Board regarding a possible 6-month postponement for major revisions (significant corrections or additions required), the timetable is as follows:

6-MONTH POSTPONEMENT FOR MAJOR REVISIONS Request for significant additions or corrections of the Thesis		Actor
Within 30/04/2025	Sending of a new official communication to the PhD Students and Referees approved by the PhD Board.	IUSS Office
Within 21/07/2025	Transmission of the edited Theses to the Referees (in carbon copy to the Coordinator and ideally to the Supervisor).	PhD Students
Within 08/09/2025	Transmission of a new written analytical evaluation on the specific form (<i>Thesis Evaluation Form</i>) on the Thesis to the Coordinator and to the IUSS Office.	Referees
Within 17/09/2025	Meeting of the Academic Board, which in the Minutes must EXPLICITLY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">deliberate on the evaluations received from the Referees with respect to each PhD Student;approve the admission to the second session of the Final Examination (even in case of repeated C-evaluation from the Referees);confirm/change the Final Examination Commission Cycle XXXVII, on the appropriate form provided by the IUSS Office, indicating the date of the examination.	Academic Board



Within 25/09/2025	Rectoral Decrees, sending out of convocations to Final Examination Commissions.	IUSS Office
Following the Minute of the Academic Board	Opening of the exam appeal and consequent sending of information on the degree attainment to PhD Students on the platform studiare.unife.it .	IUSS Office
Within 15 days before the Final Examination	Finalisation of the application for the degree attainment on studiare.unife.it and sending of the Thesis in PDF/A to the effective and expert members of the Commission and sending of the required documents to the IUSS Office.	PhD Students
From 01/10 to 19/12/2025	Second session of Final Examinations.	Examining Commission



FINAL EXAM DEADLINES CYCLE XXXVII – PHD STUDENTS PON SCHOLARSHIPS

Duration **36 months**: PhD finishes on 30 November 2024

NB: PhD Students wishing to apply to Italian INPS for Unemployment benefits (DIS-COLL) are invited to send an e-mail to the IUSS Office after 1 December 2024. The Office will send the PhD Student the dedicated certificate, exempt from tax stamp. It is not possible to issue this certificate before the end date of the PhD Course (36 months).

Time	Action	Actor
Within 10/11/2024	Electronic transmission to their Coordinator, with the Supervisor in carbon copy, the annual final report of the research carried out during the 3 rd year and the annual activity report , accordingly to the forms provided by MUR. The PhD Student, in the same communication, must also indicate to the Coordinator the contacts of the Referees identified by the Supervisor.	PhD Students PON
Within 30/11/2024	Meeting of the Academic Board, which in the Minutes shall EXPLICITLY certify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the judgement on the overall activity carried out by the PhD Student; the conclusion of their PhD Course actually took place on 30 November 2024. admission of the Thesis to the Referees' evaluation; appointment of the chosen Referees indicating '<i>Name, Surname, Institution and official email</i>' of each Referee. 	Academic Board
Within 20/12/2024	Sending of the official communication to the PhD Students and Referees approved by the PhD Board.	IUSS Office
Within 30/12/2024	Transmission of the Theses to the Referees (in carbon copy to the Coordinator and ideally to the Supervisor), together with the abstract and the report on the activities carried out during the PhD Course and any publications.	PhD Students PON
Within 10/02/2025	Transmission of written analytical evaluation on the specific form (<i>Thesis Evaluation Form</i>) on the Thesis to the Coordinator and to the IUSS Office.	Referees
Within 15/02/2025	SPECIFIC PON FULFILLMENTS Transmission, exclusively electronically on the PON platform, of: a) the annual activity report, written accordingly to the	Coordinator



	forms provided by MUR sent by the PhD Student; b) the Minutes of the Academic Board containing the assessment of the overall activity carried out by the PhD Student and certifying the conclusion of the PhD programme on 30 November 2024.	
Within 20/02/2025	Transmission of evaluations to Candidates and possibly to Tutors.	Coordinator
Within 03/03/2025	Meeting of the Academic Board, which in the Minutes must EXPLICITLY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• deliberate on the evaluations received from the Referees with respect to each PON PhD Student;• approve the admission to the first session of the Final Examination;• confirm/change the Final Examination Commission Cycle XXXVII presented for the Final Examination of regular PhD Students, indicating the date of the examination.	Academic Board
Within 14/03/2025	Rectoral Decrees, sending out of convocations to Final Examination Commissions.	IUSS Office
Following the Minute of the Academic Board	Opening of the exam appeal and consequent sending of information on the degree attainment to PhD Students on the platform studiare.unife.it .	IUSS Office
Within 15 days before the Final Examination	Finalisation of the application for the degree attainment on studiare.unife.it and sending of the Thesis in PDF/A to the effective and expert members of the Commission and sending of the required documents to the IUSS Office.	PhD Students PON
Dal 17/03/2025 al 30/05/2025	PON Final Examinations	Examining Commission
Entro e non oltre il 31 luglio 2025	SPECIFIC PON FULFILLMENTS Transmission, exclusively electronically on the PON platform, of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Minutes of the Academic Board with explicit admission to the Final Examination;• the copy of the PhD Student's Final Thesis, containing evidence of the financial support received from the PON REACT-EU Thesis Programme (see indications on the Thesis);• the individual minutes of the Final Examination Commission.	Coordinator

For further information, please send an e-mail to the IUSS Office (dottorato@unife.it) with the subject 'Final Examination Cycle XXXVII'.

Web page: <https://www.unife.it/studenti/Dottorato/it/esame>