



**UNIVERSITÉ DE
MONTPELLIER**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Version of 2025/04/29

RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

THESIS DEFENCE GUIDE Doctoral degree The University of Montpellier



Inscription et diplomation des doctorants

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CONTACTS

The Doctoral School (see the list of the Doctoral Schools co-accredited by the University of Montpellier)

⇒ <https://www.umontpellier.fr/recherche/etudes-doctorales-et-hdr>

Research and Doctoral Studies Department (Direction de la Recherche et des Études Doctorales)

Doctoral Studies Office (Service des Études Doctorales) / CC 404

Campus Triolet - building 7 – 1st floor

Place Eugène Bataillon

34 095 Montpellier

☎ : 04 67 14 49 60 / 94 40 / 94 35 / 40 23

@ : dred-soutenance-doctorat@umontpellier.fr

Opening times:

Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday: from 8.30am to 12am and from 1.30pm to 4.30pm

Thursday: from 8.30am to 12am

⇒ <https://www.umontpellier.fr/recherche/etudes-doctorales-et-hdr>

ADUM (single and shared doctorate portail): web portal of information, service, and communication for PhD Students and Doctors.

Your **personal space** is the unique interface dedicated to your entire environment concerning the doctorate. It is a secure internet site. This space will allow you to do all the procedures linked to the organization of your thesis defence:

⇒ <https://www.adum.fr>



INFORMATION

In which language to write the manuscript? In which language to defend the thesis?

In accordance with the French Code of Education (Article L121-3), a thesis must be written and defended in French. Exceptions can be envisaged, and in this case, the thesis must include a substantial summary in French (five pages at least), under the responsibility of the thesis Supervisor. The summary in French is an integral part of the thesis.

Where to defend?

The thesis defence must take place at the University of Montpellier (components, research units, etc.) or in an institution co-accredited/associated with the Doctoral School. If the defence must take place outside these institutions, the thesis Supervisor must apply for authorization by the President of the University of Montpellier.



Document to be joined to the dossier: *«Demande d'autorisation de soutenance en-dehors des locaux de l'Université de Montpellier»*

Who must book the room?

The PhD Student* and the thesis Supervisor should book the room.

**PhD Students at the Doctoral School Droit et Science Politique should contact directly the Doctoral School.*

What to do in the case of an international joint doctorate?

Long before the defence day, it is necessary to read carefully the international joint doctorate agreement with the thesis Supervisors. The defence procedures of the University of Montpellier and the partner institution must be followed. The non-respect of the agreement may lead to the annulation of the international joint doctorate agreement by the two institutions.

Information for the electronic filing of a doctoral thesis

Information on the electronic filing of the thesis (legal aspects, digital formats) can be found on the web site: <http://theses-en-ligne.fr/montpellier/>, in the tab *«Edition électronique»*.



What is the «*Contrat autorisant l'Université de Montpellier à diffuser une thèse électronique*»?

The aim of this agreement is, notably, to define the rights granted by the PhD Student to the University of Montpellier concerning the diffusion and reproduction of the thesis. Indeed, the institution where the thesis is defended must ensure the distribution of the thesis to the French university community. However, its distribution on the internet by the institution is subordinated to the authorization by the PhD Student. If the PhD Student chooses to disseminate the thesis on the Internet, it will also be disseminated via the HAL portal which constitutes an open archive intended to increase the diffusion and visibility of the theses.

The thesis is confidential. What to do?

The thesis defence is open to the public and the institution is in charge of distributing the thesis to the French university community, unless the thesis presents a proven confidential character. Indeed, some situations require departing from this rule by putting in place a confidentiality clause and/or by having a defence behind closed doors, for example: patent filing, request by an industrial partner, publication of results, etc. In this case, the President of the University of Montpellier can grant exemption and the institution takes the measures needed for the thesis protection.

• Protection of the manuscript

The thesis Supervisor must apply for exemption by the President of the University of Montpellier.



Document to be joined: «*Demande de confidentialité*»

The period of confidentiality will be defined in the «*Contrat autorisant l'Université de Montpellier à diffuser une thèse électronique*». At the end of this period, the thesis will be disseminated in function of the diffusion perimeter defined by the PhD Student (internet, the French university community) in the agreement.

• Thesis defence behind closed doors

The thesis Supervisor must apply for exemption by the President of the University of Montpellier.



Document to be joined: «*Demande d'autorisation de soutenance de these à huis-clos*»

The thesis reviewers and the jury members must sign a confidentiality agreement before reading the thesis. The thesis defence is not public. Only the candidate and the jury will be present. **Guests are not allowed.**

Embargo

The embargo period aims at postponing the distribution on the Internet up to 10 years after the defence. Meanwhile, the thesis is available within the French university community.



PREPARATION OF THE THESIS DEFENCE

In accordance with the amended French Decree of May 25th 2016 that establishes the national framework of the training and of the modalities leading to the national doctoral degree, the authorization to present a thesis for defence is granted by the President of the University of Montpellier, after recommendation by the Director of the Doctoral School, upon proposition by the thesis Supervisor.

The candidate's work is first examined by at least two reviewers who will prepare a written report. The President of the University of Montpellier will rely on the recommendations by these reviewers to authorize the thesis defence. The organization of a thesis defence relies on a procedure that requires times.

The dossier *«Demande d'autorisation de soutenance de thèse»* must be sent to the Doctoral School at latest 8 weeks before the chosen date for the thesis defence.

This request includes:

- The appointment of the reviewers (reports sent 3 weeks before the thesis defence)
- The appointment of the jury members
- The thesis defence authorization.

In order to allow the smooth organization of the thesis defence, the institution reserves the right to postpone the thesis defence date in the case of non-respect of the deadlines and of the procedure.

Important: The doctoral speciality that will appear in the diploma is the one mentioned in the last proof of enrolment. It cannot be modified in any way at the moment of the thesis defence request.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

APPOINTMENT OF REVIEWERS

Article 17 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«The authorization of thesis defence is granted by the institution head, after recommendation by the doctoral school director, on proposition by the thesis supervisor.

The PhD student's work is first examined by at least two reviewers chosen by the institution head. They must hold the French accreditation to supervise research or belong to one of the categories mentioned in the first and second subparagraphs of the article 16 of the present decree, on proposition by the director of the doctoral school, after recommendation by the thesis supervisor.

In the case of work that involves people from the socio-economic or cultural world who do not belong to the academic world, a third reviewer, known for his/her expertise in that field, could be designated on proposition by the director of the doctoral school, after recommendation by the thesis supervisor.

Except if the discipline or the thesis content does not allow it, the two reviewers are external to the PhD student's doctoral school and institution. They can belong to foreign higher education or research institutions or to other foreign institutions.

The reviewers must not have been involved in the PhD student's work.

The reviewers will let know their recommendations through written reports, at least fourteen days before the planned thesis defence date; on this basis, the institution head will authorize the thesis defence. These reports are communicated to the jury and to the PhD student before the thesis defence.»



Specific points

- A Lecturer-Researcher or a Scientist emeritus can be a reviewer.
- An Honorary Professor cannot be chosen as a reviewer.
- The reviewers must not have published any article with the PhD student in the last 5 years.
- An IMC member cannot be chosen as a reviewer.
- The appointment of a non-HDR rapporteur working in France is subject to the opinion of the Research Committee. (The time taken to process the file depends on the Research Committee's schedule).
- **In the case of an international joint doctorate, the choice of reviewers must respect the agreement established between the partner universities.**

APPOINTMENT OF JURY MEMBERS

Article 18 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

“The thesis jury is nominated by the head of the institution after recommendation by the director of the doctoral school and of the thesis supervisor. The number of jury members ranges between four and eight. It is composed at least for half by French or international personalities who are external to the research unit where the thesis was prepared, to the doctoral school and to the institution where the PhD student is registered and who are chosen on the basis of their scientific or professional competence in the concerned research field, subject to the provisions concerning the international joint thesis degree defined in the title III of the present decree.

Its composition must allow the balanced representation of women and men. At least half of the jury members should be professors or professionals of equivalent status [...].

The jury members nominate among them a president, and if applicable, a thesis defence reviewer. The president must be a professor or a teacher of equivalent status.

The thesis supervisor, or any person who whas involved in the thesis direction, will not take part in the decision. When several institutions are accredited to co-deliver a doctoral degree, the jury is designated by the concerned institutions within the conditions established by the agreement mentioned in the article 5 of the present decree. “

Examination by videoconference :

Article 19 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«[...] Exceptionally, and with the exclusion of the president, the jury members can take part in a thesis defence by means of videoconference or of electronic communication that allows their identification and their effective participation in a collegial discussion and with satisfactory technical characteristics to guarantee the continuous and simultaneous transmissions of the discussions. [...] »

Procedure

- ⇒ The PhD Student ticks the box «*videoconference*» on ADUM during the input of the jury members.
- ⇒ The jury member in videoconference will receive a mandate with his appointment by electronic mail («*procuration membre du jury en visioconférence*»). He must fill in, sign and send back this mandate to the thesis Supervisor who will give it to the jury President on defence day.



Specific points

- **In the case of an international joint doctorate, the jury composition must respect the agreement established between the partner universities.**
- A Lecturer-Researcher or a Scientist emeritus can be a jury member.
- An Honorary Professor cannot be a jury member.
- The thesis Supervisor and/or co-Supervisor can be part of the jury. Therefore, they are taken into account for calculating the jury composition ratios. They are present during the discussion and their participation is important for the proper understanding of the work they supervised. They can, if needed, inform the discussion that will lead to the decision. Therefore, their mission is not to direct the discussion and, although present during the debate, they will not take part in the final decision.
- The thesis Supervisor or co-Supervisor cannot be chosen as President of the jury.
- The jury can include, exceptionally, invited members, but they do not participate in the discussions. The number of invited members is limited to 2 people. The names of the invited members will not appear on the diploma.
- The defence can take place in total or partial videoconference.
- The video conference must take place in an institutional environment.
- The president of the jury may be in videoconference.

THESIS DEFENCE AUTHORIZATION

Article 17 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«The authorization to defend a thesis is granted by the head of the institution, after recommendation by the director of the doctoral school, upon proposition by the thesis supervisor.

[...] The reviewers let know their recommendations by written reports, at least fourteen days before the planned defence date; on this basis, the head of the institution authorizes the thesis defence. [...]»

The thesis defence authorization will be granted upon reception of the reviewers' reports

PROCEDURE

THE PHD STUDENT

From their ADUM personal space “*Je souhaite effectuer ma demande de soutenance*” in the section “*Procédures*”:

- ⇒ Updates his profile and fill in completely the section reserved for the thesis defence: thesis title, key words, date, place, confidentiality, reviewers, jury members, summary, videoconference, etc.

The PhD Student must pay particular attention in giving the contact details of the reviewers and jury members because they will be used by the Doctoral Studies Office to contact them.



- ⇒ Uploads his thesis in PDF format and conform to the version used for the thesis defence. He must use the *“Couverture de thèse de l’Université de Montpellier”* or *“Couverture de thèse de l’Université de Montpellier – Cotutelle”*. This is the electronic version that will be sent to the reviewers and jury members.
- ⇒ Clicks on *“Transmission des données”* in the tab *“Je finalise la procédure”*.

Print the complete file which consists of :

- the *“Demande d’autorisation de soutenance de thèse”* from their personal space.
- two copies of the *“Contrat autorisant l’Université de Montpellier à diffuser une thèse électronique”*. This agreement allows to choose the distribution perimeter of the thesis (internet with or without an embargo period or the French university community) and to define a confidentiality period, if required.
- Prints out and sign the proof of submission *“Certificat de conformité avec la version de soutenance”*.
- the relevant documents in function of the situation :
 - *“Demande d’autorisation de soutenance en-dehors des locaux de l’Université de Montpellier”*,
 - *“Demande de confidentialité, demande d’autorisation de soutenance à huis-clos”*.

Have the complete file signed by the thesis director(s) and forwarded to the Doctoral School.

Specific points

- For non-reporters, a CV with a list of publications must be attached.
- A CV may be requested for foreign personalities participating in the jury in order to verify the equivalence of the grade by virtue of their activity.
- The appointment of non-HDR rapporteurs working in France is subject to the opinion of the Research Commission. The time required to process the application depends on the schedule of the commissions.

It is strongly recommended to send a paper version of the thesis to the reviewers.

THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

- ⇒ Checks, analyses and completes the dossier.
- ⇒ Submits the dossier to the Director of the Doctoral School for opinion.
- ⇒ Sends the complete dossier to the Doctoral Studies Office.

THE DOCTORAL STUDIES OFFICE

- ⇒ Submits the dossier to the President of the University of Montpellier who nominates the reviewers and the jury members
- ⇒ Sends by e-mail the letter of nomination to the reviewers and the notification to the jury members. The PhD Student, the thesis Supervisor(s) and the Doctoral School receive a copy of this message.
- ⇒ Ensures the return of the reports, **which is a condition for the authorisation of the defence**. The rapporteurs submit their signed reports in electronic format, which will be automatically transmitted to the doctoral candidate, the thesis director(s), the Doctoral School and the Doctoral Studies Department. An email is sent to the thesis director(s) and the Doctoral School to finalise the authorisation of the defence for the decision of the President of the University of Montpellier.
- ⇒ Transmits the reports to the members of the jury. The doctoral student and the thesis director(s) are copied on the email.
- ⇒ Makes the defence documents available in the personal ADUM space of the PhD student and the PhD supervisor* to be given to the jury on the day of the defence.

**For the PhD Students affiliated to the Doctoral School Droit et Science Politique, the defence documents will be distributed directly by the Doctoral School.*

SPECIFIC CASE: ABSENCE OF A JURY MEMBER

The jury appointed by the President of the University of Montpellier cannot be modified on the day of the defence. However, in the event of the exceptional absence of a member of the jury, which would render the jury non-compliant with the regulations, the thesis director must contact the Doctoral School and the Doctoral Studies Department as soon as possible in order to adapt the jury so that the defence can continue.

In order to re-establish the balance of the jury, the following solutions can be considered

- positioning a member of the jury as a guest
- withdraw or propose a new member of the jury (video-conferencing can facilitate this solution)

The thesis Supervisor must send the details of the new jury composition by email to the Doctoral School and to the Doctoral Studies Office (dred-soutenance-doctorat@umontpellier.fr). If a new member is proposed, the thesis Supervisor must indicate his surname, name, title, institution of affiliation, and email address.

The thus-modified jury must be validated by the Director of the Doctoral School before being designated by the President of the University of Montpellier.

THE DAY OF THE THESIS DEFENCE

Article 18 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«[...] The jury members choose a president among them and, if required, a thesis defence reviewer. The president must be a professor or a professional with similar status or a teacher of equivalent status.

The thesis supervisor, or any person who was involved in the thesis direction, will not take part in the decision. When more than one institution is accredited to grant jointly a doctoral degree, the jury is nominated by the heads of the concerned institutions in the conditions established by the agreement mentioned in the article 5 of the present decree.»

Article 19 of the amended Decree May 25th 2016:

« The thesis defence is open to the public, unless exemption is granted exceptionally by the head of the institution if the thesis subject presents a proven confidential nature.

Before the thesis defence, the thesis summary is diffused within the institution or the institutions that benefit of a joint accreditation. During its discussions, the jury evaluates the quality and novelty of the work, the PhD student's ability to put these findings in their scientific context as well as the quality of the presentation. The jury can ask for corrections in accordance with the article 24 of the present decree. When the work is the result of collective research, the part performed by each PhD student is assessed in a dissertation prepared and presented to the jury individually.[...]

The thesis defence result (pass or adjournment) is decided after the jury's deliberation.

The president signs the defence report that is then countersigned by all jury members present at the thesis defence.

The defence report is sent to the PhD student in the month following the thesis defence.»

Article 19bis of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

« By the end of the thesis defence and if graduated, doctors take an individual oath to respect the principles and requirements of research integrity in their on-going professional career, whatever the chosen field. The doctor's oath related to research integrity goes as follows : in the presence of my peers. With the completion of my doctorate in [xxx], in my quest for knowledge, I have carried out demanding research, demonstrated intellectual rigour, ethical reflection and respect for the principles of research integrity. As I pursue my professional career, whatever my chosen field, I pledge, to the greatest of my ability, to continue to maintain integrity in my relationship to knowledge, to my methods and to my results. »

Procedure:

The PhD student or the thesis director uploads the defence documents from his/her personal ADUM space and hands them over to either the thesis director or the president of the jury.

Specific points

- The PhD Student or the thesis Supervisor gives the defence documents to the jury President. The thesis defence result (pass or adjournment) is decided after the jury's deliberation.
- The jury President prepares and signs the defence report that is **countersigned by all the jury members, including the thesis Supervisor(s)**.
- This report must be written in French. In addition, a translation in English can be added in the same report. In the case of an international joint doctorate, the report can be written only in English.
- The thesis defence minutes must be signed by all jury members, with the exception of the thesis Supervisor(s). If a jury member takes part in the defence by videoconference, the **«procuration membre du jury en visioconférence»** must be joined.
- The jury's recommendation on the thesis electronic reproduction is completed and signed by the President of the jury.
- Once graduated, the President of the jury invites the doctor to take an oath.

AFTER THE THESIS DEFENCE

SENDING BACK THE DEFENCE DOCUMENTS

Article 19 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«[...] The defence report is sent to the doctoral student in the month following the thesis defence.»

The thesis Supervisor or the President of the jury has the responsibility to give to the Doctoral Studies Office* the **ORIGINAL defence documents duly completed and signed, at latest 15 days after the thesis defence:**

- The thesis defence minutes
- The thesis defence report
- The jury's recommendation on the thesis electronic reproduction
- The «*procuration membre du jury en visioconférence*» for the concerned jury members.

**For the PhD students affiliated to the Doctoral School Droit et Science Politique:*

*The Doctoral School has the responsibility of giving to the Doctoral Studies Office the **ORIGINAL defence documents duly completed and signed, at latest 15 days after the thesis defence.***

FINAL VERSION OF THE THESIS MANUSCRIPT

Article 24 of the amended Decree of May 25th 2016:

«[...] If the jury has requested the introduction of corrections in the thesis, the new doctor has a time limit of three months to send a corrected thesis in electronic form.»

Within a maximum of 3 months after the defence, the doctor submits the definitive digital version of the thesis in PDF format from his or her personal ADUM space, including the name of the jury president on the first page of the manuscript and any corrections requested by the jury.

Indeed, at the end of the defense, the jury has the possibility to ask the doctor :

- ⇒ To make corrections to his or her manuscript that will not require validation by the President of the jury,
- ⇒ To make corrections to his/her manuscript that will require validation by the President of the jury. In this case, the certificate of achievement and the diploma will be issued after validation of the new version of the manuscript by the President of the jury, at the Doctoral Studies Department.

CERTIFICATE OF SUCCESS

The certificate of successful completion of the doctoral degree will be prepared only **after reception of all the ORIGINAL defence documents duly completed and signed** within a time limit of 3 weeks after the proclamation of the results, in accordance with the circular note of 2015 concerning the delivery of French national diplomas. The doctor must present identification to the office of doctoral studies to withdraw the certificate.

The certificate of achievement and a copy of the defence report are sent by email to the Doctor.

DIPLOMA

The diplomas are signed by the President of the University of Montpellier and the Chief Education Officer of Montpellier Education Authority within a time limit of six months. Upon reception of the duly signed diplomas, the Doctoral Studies Office will rapidly contact the doctors to hand over their diploma.

- **Collection at the Office of Doctoral Studies:** the doctor must show a valid identity document.
- **By post:** the doctor must send the document *«procédure de retrait du diplôme»* to the Doctoral Studies Office together with a copy of a valid identity document.
Diplomas to be sent to foreign countries will be delivered to the local French embassy or European Union delegation, via the Diplomatic Bag service.
- **By proxy:** the doctor must fill in the *«procuration pour retrait du diplôme»*. The authorized representative must present this mandate, a copy of the doctor's identity document and his/her identity document to the Office of Doctoral Study.

CAREER PATH OF THE DOCTOR

The doctors are kindly asked to regularly update their contact information and to inform the Doctoral School about their career path, via ADUM, for the 5 years following their thesis defence, particularly, by indicating the jobs occupied and by answering to the surveys that could be sent to them.

This information will allow the Doctoral School to keep alive the network of the University of Montpellier doctors and to valorise the doctoral degree.

APPENDIXES

- Thesis defense process available at the following address:
<https://www.umontpellier.fr/recherche/etudes-doctorales-et-hdr>

- Examples of form types
 - **Demande d'autorisation de soutenance (see below)**
Request to authorize a thesis defence

- **Standard forms can be downloaded at :**
<https://www.umontpellier.fr/recherche/etudes-doctorales-et-hdr>
Doctoral defense > Downloads
 - **Demande d'autorisation de soutenance en dehors des locaux de l'Université de Montpellier**
Request to authorize a thesis defence outside the premises of the University of Montpellier
 - **Demande de confidentialité / Demande d'autorisation de soutenance de thèse à huis-clos**
Confidentiality request / Request to authorize a thesis defence behind closed doors
 - **Procuration membre du jury en visioconférence**
Mandate for jury member in videoconference
 - **Procédure de retrait du diplôme**
Procedure for diploma collection
 - **Procuration pour retrait du diplôme**
Mandate for diploma collection
 - **Thesis cover of the University of Montpellier**
 - **Thesis cover of the University of Montpellier - International joint doctorate**

- **Rules and regulations**
 - **Amended decree of May 25th 2016 that defines the national frame of training and the modalities leading to the delivery of a national doctoral degree**
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000032587086/>

 - **Decree of June 15th 1992 that defines the list of the civil servants bodies with equivalent status to that of university professors and lecturers for the nomination of the member of the French National Board of Universities**
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGITEXT000019860291/>

 - **Ministerial Circular No. 2019-134 of 25-9-2019 on the modalities of elaboration and delivery of national diplomas and some State diplomas by higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation**
https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid20536/bulletin-officiel.html?cid_bo=145326&cbo=1