

Doctoral Program in Economics
Interim Defense Examination of the Doctoral Thesis
Instructions for the Student

1. Definition and goals

The interim defense of the thesis is a requirement of the doctoral program in Economics at FEP (*Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Porto*), whereby the defense examination is the observation of this requirement.

The jury is formed by at least three professors, who will be appointed by the Scientific Board of FEP following the proposal of the Doctoral Program Scientific Board.

The goals of the interim defense of the thesis before a restricted assessment jury are two: (i) validate the on-going work and (ii) systematize suggestions and guidelines.

(i) Validate the on-going work in the following aspects:

- whether the conclusion of the thesis is attainable within the deadline (as a reference, two years after completing the course work);
- whether the thesis is relevant as a subject of scientific investigation in Economics; and
- whether it is capable of making a contribution to the progress of scientific knowledge in the field and, as such, to produce research for scientific publication.

(ii) Systematize suggestions and guidelines, including eventual direction adjustments, which are deemed useful for the pursuit of the thesis and its completion within the deadline.

2. Contents

In his/her interim defense of the thesis, the candidate must be capable of indicating, by means of a written document – the Interim Thesis – which is open to discussion, the following aspects of the thesis:

- expected date of completion;
- foreseeable thesis structure;
- motivation and goals;
- relationship to the relevant scientific literature;
- research methods and tools;
- exemplification of how research methods and tools are applied.

As an example, below are some questions covering motivation, goals, methods and tools, the answers to which, by description and exemplification, allow the assessment of the thesis' viability:

- What is the outcome and what are the current gaps of the literature on the subject? How do you expect to contribute to scientific knowledge in the field?

- If an empirical method is used, which statistical data and corresponding sources are to be used? Which econometric/statistical treatment is the most appropriate?
- If the method entails computational modelization and simulation, which programs / algorithms are the most appropriate?
- If the method entails experimentation, which techniques and experimental design are the most appropriate?
- In the case of a thesis structured as a collection of essays, the specification / exemplification of both the framing in the literature and the research methods and tools must be detailed at least in two of the essays, which should presumably represent two thirds of the thesis.

3. Schedules

The procedure of interim defense of the thesis must be initiated by the adviser, once both adviser and candidate consider that the thesis work accomplished so far meets the above mentioned goals and content requirements.

As an indicative time limit, in order to meet the goals of the interim thesis defense in a timely manner, the defense examination should take place by the end of the sixth semester of the program, *i.e.* until the end of the first year exclusively dedicated to the thesis.

4. Procedures

The adviser (assisted by the internal tutor, in the case of external advisers) plays a central role in the whole process of the interim thesis defense, since the interim thesis builds the core of the doctoral thesis, in terms of timing and contents.

4.1. Jury nomination

The standard jury composition (of three people) is as follows:

- adviser + two professors, of which one must be external to FEP.

In the case of co-advising, the standard is:

- advisers + one professor, of which one must be external to FEP.

A member of the Doctoral Program Scientific Board shall attend the examination, as an observer.

Once adviser and candidate consider that the interim thesis meets the above mentioned goals and content requirements, the former must submit the following to the Program Scientific Board:

- jury composition proposal;
- *Curriculum Vitae* of the external professors; and
- *synopsis* (one A4 page) of the interim thesis.

4.2. Scheduling the defense examination

Once the jury composition has been approved (and officially conveyed by the Scientific Board of FEP), the adviser will:

- establish the date for the examination, in accordance with the Doctoral Program Scientific Board, with all other members of the jury and the candidate; and

- send the Interim Thesis to all other members of the jury and to the Doctoral Program Scientific Board.

4.3. Conducting the defense examination

The examination requires the candidate's presence and the agenda is conducted by the adviser.

An initial presentation by the candidate is not necessary.

The Interim Thesis is to be discussed together by the jury and the candidate, taking into account only the goals described in (1).

An absent member of the jury should contribute the examination by previously providing a report including comments, suggestions and a voting decision.

The jury will decide, by majority, to approve or not to approve the Interim Thesis.

4.4. Follow-up and closing of the Interim Thesis process

After the examination, it is incumbent on the adviser to draw up a document and to send it, within a month, to the candidate, as well as to all other members of the jury and to the Doctoral Program Scientific Board, including:

- a summarized description of the examination;
- in the case of approval, a memorandum containing a synthesis of the suggestions and eventual guidelines for direction adjustment, which he deems necessary, as a result of the outcome from the above mentioned discussion, to continue the thesis and to complete it within the schedule; and
- in the case of non approval, a memorandum containing a synthesis of all actions to be carried out in order to reformulate the thesis, along with the corresponding deadlines.

In the case of non approval, the Doctoral Program Scientific Board will decide, within one month after receiving the memorandum, on the eventual need to repeat the process as well as on the corresponding deadlines.

In the case of approval, the student will carry on his/her work, under the guidance of the adviser, until the completion of the thesis, in principle within the expected two-year (after completion of the course work) deadline.

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