

Guidelines for Second Assessments for Dissertations at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (KSF) at the University of Lucerne

About the Second Assessment Itself

Second assessors need to hand in a second assessment within 4 months after receiving the manuscript. The second assessment should briefly summarize the key findings of the dissertation and to set them into the context of existing research. It should also contain all points of essential criticism. Revisions that absolutely should be made before the final publication ought to be specified in a separate part/ passage.

There are no guidelines regarding format. On average, second assessments are 3 to 4 pages long.

Please note that the Dean's Office won't share any assessments with the doctoral candidate prior to the defense. It is up to you whether you do so. We recommend that you coordinate your decision with the first assessor.

Defense/ Viva Examination

After reception of both first and second assessment, the dean's office of the KSF makes the dissertation and assessment available to all habilitated faculty members for a period of 4 weeks. If 3 days after this period has ended no objections to finalizing the graduation process reach the dean's office, the defense can take place.

The dean's office already contacts all participants of the defense after having received both assessments for setting a date for the defense. If the second assessor, due to important reasons, cannot be physically present at the defense, the dean's office can be asked to organize a solution via video conferencing.

The defense consists of a 20 minutes presentation by the doctoral student, open to all members of the faculty, followed by 40 minutes of questions and answers during which first and second assessors take turns asking questions. Questions by other habilitated members of the faculty are permitted. The defense is moderated by the dean or the vice-dean or the head of the Examinations Committee.

Grading/ Marks

If first and second assessment differ in their assessment by one grade or more¹, a third assessment will be requested – which tends to prolong the graduation process. For the final grade, both first and second assessments are weighted 3 times (i.e. each contributing 30 % to the final grade) whereas the defense is weighted 4 times (i.e. contributing 40 % to the final grade).

¹ The following assessments correspond to the individual grades:

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|-----|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 6 | excellent / summa cum laude | 4 | adequate / rite |
| 5.5 | very good / insigni cum laude | 3 | inadequate |
| 5 | good / magna cum laude | 2 | poor |
| 4.5 | satisfactory / cum laude | 1 | very poor |