

Graduation process in the DoCS programme

The graduation process in the DoCS programme follows the guidelines of the University of Helsinki and especially the Faculty of Science (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-science/faculty/phd-thesis>). However, the DoCS programme has some programme-specific instructions and guidelines as well. When a DoCS student has completed all the studies belonging to the doctoral programme and the doctoral thesis is ready for examination, the steps described in this document are required for graduation.

Note that the thesis examination process was altered on the 1st of August 2025. If the pre-examination of the thesis was started before that time, the process will continue according to the earlier process guidelines. The possible differences in the steps of the process based on the starting time of the pre-examination of the thesis are explained in the corresponding parts of this document.

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1 Registration of PhD study modules

When a doctoral candidate has completed all the courses belonging to the doctoral degree in the DoCS programme, the modules required for the doctoral degree must be registered (compiled) before the thesis of the doctoral candidate can be pre-examined. General information on registration of doctoral studies can be found in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/registration-doctoral-studies>. Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme-specific instructions.

Currently, the doctoral study modules can be registered as follows:

1. Make sure that you have made a study plan in the SISU system according to the degree requirements that you are following. Check that all the studies to be included to the two doctoral study modules “DOCS-998 Discipline-Specific Studies”, and “DONAS-997 General Competence Studies” (in the degree structure before 2023) or “PHD-997 Transferable Skills” (in the degree structures from 2023 onwards) are indicated in your study plan to have been completed and approved. If you have troubles in adding some of your studies to the study plan, please contact the PhD study advisor of DoCS, Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi).
2. Request for registration for the modules “DOCS-998 Discipline-Specific Studies” and “DONAS-997 General Competence Studies” or “PHD-997 Transferable Skills” in the SISU system, if your studies comply with the rules in the SISU system (Option 1 on the page mentioned above). This is the option that can be applied in most of the cases.
3. If you have previously completed study modules that have been registered according to the old degree requirements (before 2020) and if these modules partly or fully substitute for studies according to the new requirements, you should apply for the approval of the old study modules in Sisu’s free edit mode (Option 2 on the page mentioned above). This option applies only to a very few cases, if any, in the DoCS programme.

If you have any problems with your study plan or making the requests for registration of your study modules, you can always contact the PhD study advisor of DoCS, Pirjo (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi) and ask for help.

2 Thesis templates of DoCS

The doctoral theses in Computer Science are published in **the A series of the Department of Computer Science**, not in any of the other thesis series of the University of Helsinki. The programme has an own LaTeX template for the thesis. The installation and other instructions related to this template package are given in the following sections. Currently, there is no official Overleaf template for the doctoral theses of DoCS, but as soon as there will be one, the link to that template will be added here.

2.1 Installation instructions for the `tktla` document class

This LaTeX package related to the doctoral theses in Computer Science contains the following files:

- [tktla.cls](#) - the actual implementation of the document class
- [tktla.ps](#) - formatted documentation
- [tktla.dtx](#), [tktla.ins](#) - source files for both the implementation and the documentation
- [example.tex](#) and [example.pdf](#) meant for theses containing figures in the eps format and to be run with command "latex" and "dvips"

- [example2.tex](#) and [example2.pdf](#) meant for theses containing figures in the pdf format and to be run with command "pdflatex"
- [thesis-papers.tex](#) - an example file on how to make the interleaves for an article-based thesis

To use the document class, it is enough to copy the file `tktla.cls` somewhere where LaTeX can find it (this is the only file that is necessary for using the class). Probably the easiest way is to copy it to the directory where you will create your document: LaTeX looks for package and class files also in the current directory.

2.2 Modifying the package

If you wish to modify the package, you can modify `tktla.cls` directly, but you should note that the file is automatically generated from `tktla.dtx` and `tktla.ins` (along with the documentation). The command to create `tktla.cls` from `tktla.dtx` and `tktla.ins` is "`tex tktla.ins`".

The formatted documentation (`tktla.ps`) can be generated by running the following commands:

- `latex tktla.dtx`
- `latex tktla.dtx`
- `dvips tktla.dvi -o tktla.ps`

If you want to modify `tktla.dtx` directly, you should note that, as in all `.dtx` files, the comments in the file contain LaTeX source for the formatted documentation. See the documentation for the standard `doc` and `docstrip` packages (`doc.dvi` and `docstrip.dvi`) for details.

2.3 Using the package

This section describes how the LaTeX package related to the doctoral theses in Computer Science is used. Using the package should be quite straightforward when the thesis is a monograph. If the thesis is an article-based dissertation, then some additional things need to be considered.

An **article-based dissertation** (Finnish: *nippuväitöskirja*) consists of two parts:

- a preamble part (i.e., an introductory summary of the articles), and
- some original articles.

In addition to the summary, the preamble part of the thesis should contain a list of the original articles briefly describing the main contributions of them. Usually, that list is placed before the list of contents in the preamble part of the thesis.

Before each original article there must also be a page (**an interleaf**) describing where the article was originally published, who has the copyright to the article, and whether the article

has a permission to be re-printed. These pages (or the articles) are numbered with Roman numbers within a black rectangle.

One possibility is to make the pages yourself (**recommended**) and then send a single PDF to Unigrafia for printing. The thesis template of the department now contains an example file for producing of these interleaves. The example file works for six original articles, and the commands for making the numbered rectangles need to be modified, if there are less or more original articles related to the thesis. The example file can be run as a separate LaTeX to produce a PDF of the interleaves and the original articles, or the commands in it can be included to the main file of the thesis, to produce a single PDF of both the preamble part and the original articles.

Another way of getting the interleaves to the thesis is to depend on the help of Unigrafia (**not recommended in DoCS**). In that case, you should send the preamble part as a PDF together with all the articles as separate PDF files to Unigrafia. In addition to that you must send the texts that come to the interleaves to them separate, for example, as a text file. In this case, some extra costs will be added to the printing invoice of the thesis.

When using the LaTeX package, you need to decide whether you want to use the Computing Reviews of 1998 or 2012. In the current version of **tktla.cls** and other template files it is assumed that the 2012 version is used. If you, however, decide to use the older version of 1998, then you need to edit the **tktla.cls** file related to the corresponding command in it. In addition to the actual contents, either the monograph or the article-based thesis (the preamble and the original articles with the overleaves), the thesis catalogue of the department must be attached to every doctoral thesis. Check details on this in Section 5.

3 Pre-examination of the doctoral thesis

General information on pre-examination of doctoral theses can be found in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/preliminary-examination>. Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions. That page contains, for example, information on planning the timetable of the graduation, and a description of the pre-examination process.

In the DoCS programme, the pre-examination of the doctoral theses follows the guidelines of the Faculty of Science (see <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/faculty-science-submitting-doctoral-thesis> and <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-science/faculty/phd-thesis>). Note that the thesis examination process was altered on **the 1st of August 2025**, and the instructions in this section describe the process after that date. One of the main differences to the previous process is that now both the pre-examiners of the thesis and the members of the grading committee (opponent, custos and faculty representative(s)) are appointed at the beginning of the pre-examination process, i.e., in the same meeting of the Faculty Council where the pre-examiners are appointed, and not separately as before.

The steps required for the pre-examination of a doctoral thesis in the DoCS programme are the following:

- When an approximate schedule has been set for a PhD thesis to be ready for pre-examination, **your supervisor** should start thinking about who the pre-examiners of the thesis could be. At the same time, the supervisor must also think who would be the members of the grading committee, i.e., the opponent, custos and faculty representative(s). Then the supervisor is supposed to contact these potential **pre-examiners, opponent, custos and faculty representative(s)** and ask, if they would be willing to accept this task.
- For **the pre-examination of the thesis**, at least two pre-examiners are needed. When selecting pre-examiners, competence requirements and disqualifying circumstances must be considered (<https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/appointment-and-duties-preliminary-examiners> and <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-science/faculty/phd-thesis>).
- The grading committee of a PhD thesis consists of **the opponent, the custos and one or two faculty representatives**. Please see the instructions on who can act in these roles at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/grading-committee>. Note that according to the new guidelines, one of the pre-examiners of the thesis can now also be appointed as an opponent.
- When the pre-examiners and the members of the grading committee have committed to the work, your supervisor, or if the supervisor is not a professor, **your coordinating academic** will propose the appointment of the pre-examiners and the grading committee members to the Faculty of Science. In practice, the supervisor, or if the supervisor is not a professor, the coordinating academic for the doctoral candidate fills in e-form "[Proposal for the preliminary examiners and grading committee – Faculty of Science](#)". Please, remember to follow the instructions given on the form. The coordinating academic and the doctoral candidate will be asked by e-mail to confirm the submission.
- When the proposal has been submitted, please, also send information on that the proposal has been made to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi).
- In case your thesis is an article-based one, you'll have to send **the list of publications included to your thesis** to the Faculty, too. See instructions on that on the form for the proposal of the pre-examiners and the grading committee above.
- In addition to the proposal form, you also have to send **the manuscript of your thesis** to the Faculty. The Faculty will then submit the manuscript to the pre-examiners. You should send the manuscript including published and yet unpublished articles as one PDF file to kumpula-phd@helsinki.fi **at least one week before the Faculty Council meeting, where the pre-examiners and the grading committee will be appointed**. Remember also to send them at the same time, the report on your contribution to each co-authored publication included into your thesis, if the contributions are not explained in the thesis manuscript.

- It is recommended that the language of your thesis is checked either before it is sent for pre-examination, or at least before the final thesis is printed. You can send your thesis for language checking to Marina Kurtén, the translator of the Department of Computer Science.

When the pre-examiners have been appointed at a meeting of the Faculty Council, the Faculty sends a letter to the selected pre-examiners. The letter will announce the decision, give instructions on the contents of the statement, and include the forms necessary for payment of fees and a template for the statement. The statement can also be written in the examiner's own words. At this point, the Faculty will also send the thesis manuscript to the pre-examiners.

The pre-examination time of theses is now **1 month (4 weeks)**. The pre-examiners must right their statements on the thesis during that time using **the statement template of the University of Helsinki**. In their statements, the pre-examiners can either endorse the permission to defend (minor corrections are possible) or identify significant deficiencies in the manuscript preventing the permission to defend. Requiring substantial corrections to the thesis before giving the doctoral candidate a permission to defend the thesis are no longer an option.

4 Permission for public defence of the thesis

Once the Faculty of Science has received **favourable statements** from the pre-examiners, you will be granted the permission to proceed to public examination of your thesis (i.e., you'll get a permission for public examination). General information on getting the permission for public examination and publishing the thesis and well as appointing an opponent, a custos and a faculty representative for your public examination you can find at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/permission-proceed-and-publishing>. Remember to choose "Doctoral Programme in Computer Science" as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions.

In this part of the process, the DoCS programme follows the instructions of the Faculty of Science (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-science/faculty/phd-thesis>). The steps required for this part of the process in the DoCS programme are the following:

1. The pre-examination process started before 1.8.2025

- If the preliminary examination of your thesis started **before the 1st of August 2025**, an opponent, a custos and a faculty representative (or in some cases two) for the public examination must be appointed at this point. These persons also form the grading committee of the thesis. Your supervisor should think who these persons could be and contact them, even while your thesis is being pre-examined. Please see the instructions on who can act in these roles at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/grading-committee>.
- The supervisor of the doctoral candidate or, if the supervisor is not a professor, a professor responsible for the doctoral candidate will propose the appointment of the opponent, custos and faculty representative(s) to the Faculty Council.

Typically, only one faculty representative is needed. In practice, this means that the supervisor, if the supervisor is not a professor, a professor responsible for the doctoral candidate, fills in e-form "[Proposal for the opponent, custos and faculty representative\(s\) - Faculty of Science](#)". The responsible professor and the doctoral candidate will be asked by e-mail to confirm the submission.

- Please, also send information on that the proposal has been made to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi).
- When the Faculty Council has appointed the opponent, custos and faculty representative(s), and given a permission for printing the thesis and for defending it in public, the Faculty will send a package of instructions to you.
- The permission to defend is valid for 9 months.

2. The pre-examination process started on 1.8.2025 or after that

- If the preliminary examination of your thesis begins **after the 1st of August 2025**, the members of the grading committee, i.e., the opponent, custos and faculty representative(s), have already been appointed at the same time when the pre-examiners of the thesis were appointed.
- When the statements of the pre-examiners are unanimous and unequivocally supportive of granting permission to defend the thesis and the statements are done using the university's statement template, the Dean of the Faculty of Science can give you a permission for printing the thesis and for defending it in public.
- If there is anything unclear or contradictory in the statements, or if the doctoral candidate submits a response to them, then the Faculty will make the decision on giving the permission for printing the thesis and for defending it in public.
- When you have got the permission to defend your thesis, the Faculty will send a package of instructions to you.
- The permission to defend is valid for 9 months.
- As soon as you get the information that your pre-examination statements have arrived and when you'll get the permission to defend your thesis, please, contact Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi), so that we can discuss about the schedule of the following steps in the process, i.e., the steps described in Sections 5-9 of this document. These final steps usually require about four weeks before the defence.

If the statements of your pre-examiners are not favourable and you are not given a permission for printing and defending your thesis, the pre-examination of your thesis is discontinued. A new pre-examination can be started when your supervisor thinks that it would be possible.

5 Finalising the doctoral thesis

General information on finalising of doctoral theses can be found in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications>. Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions. That page contains also printing and distribution of the thesis as well as information needed for communications related to the public examination.

The doctoral theses in Computer Science are published in **the A series of the Department of Computer Science**, NOT in any other publication series of the University of Helsinki (like series *Dissertationes Universitatis Helsingiensis*, which is the publication series of the university’s doctoral school). When you are finalising your doctoral thesis, consider the following points:

- It is recommended that the language of your thesis is checked either before it is sent for pre-examination, or at least before the final thesis is printed. You can send your thesis for language checking to Marina Kurtén, the translator of the Department of Computer Science.
- Check that you are using the **latest version** of the LaTeX template (See Section 2 of this document) for the department's doctoral theses, and that you have considered the other departmental instructions concerning the theses.
- A doctoral candidate must make sure that his/her thesis is furnished with **an A series number** and **two ISBN numbers**. The PhD study advisor of DoCS, Pirjo Moen provides the A series number, and after that **the Finnish ISBN centre** provides the ISBN numbers based on application (<https://tunnisteportaali.kansalliskirjasto.fi/forms/isbn-ismn-publication?lng=en>):
 - The publisher is **University of Helsinki**, and the publisher identifier is **978-952-10**.
 - The series ISSN numbers are **1238-8645** (print) and **2814-4031** (online). The name of the series is **Series of publications A / Department of Computer Science, University of Helsinki**.
 - When the form asks for the ISSN number of the publication series, please, give there the number of the printed series.
 - **Note!** You need two ISBN numbers, one for the paper version and one for the electronic version. Both the ISBN numbers will start with number series “978-951-51” or “978-952-84”.
 - **Note 2!** Apply for the A series number for your thesis from Pirjo Moen before you apply for the ISBN numbers.

- **Note 3!** Remember that you have to apply for the ISBN numbers from **the Finnish ISBN centre** using the link above, and **NOT** from Unigrafia, as they do **not** provide ISBN numbers for our publication series.
- **The thesis catalogue of the department** (the A series list) must be attached to the end of the doctoral thesis (2 pages). Make sure that all the latest theses are included by checking with Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi), if the thesis catalogue is up to date for your thesis. If the list does not fit on two pages, you can remove the first ('oldest') year. It is customary not to include your own thesis in the list. Note that these catalogue pages are not numbered in the thesis, nor they are counted into the length of the thesis.

Note! You must wait until you receive **the permission to defend your thesis** at a public examination (aka "permission to print") before you can apply for the A series number and the ISBN numbers for your thesis.

Note 2! Send the final PDF version of your thesis (for checking some technical details) to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi) **BEFORE** sending it to Unigrafia for printing. This technical check usually takes around one week, depending on the technical changes needed to the thesis.

6 Having the doctoral thesis printed

General information on having the doctoral thesis printed can be found in "Instructions for students" at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications>. Remember to choose "Doctoral Programme in Computer Science" as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions. That page also contains distribution of the thesis as well as information needed for communications related to the public examination.

Doctoral theses in Computer Science are published in **the A series of the Department of Computer Science** and printed by the [Unigrafia](#). The steps related to this part of the process are the following:

- The University of Helsinki has decided that each doctoral candidate must publish her/his doctoral thesis online in the e-thesis service of the university and distribute some printed copies of the doctoral thesis at the university. The minimum number of printed copies required is 20. More detailed information on the distribution of the theses is available on the web site of the Faculty of Science.
- The university pays the printing costs of the 20 theses (around 120€; non-coloured copies). No separate application for the financial support for this part of the printing costs is required.
- If more than 20 printed copies of the thesis are needed (see the guidelines of the distribution of the theses), respondents should negotiate with their supervisors on how many theses to print. The DoCS programme is ready to pay for up to 20 theses above the 20 copies required by the university. You can also ask Pirjo Moen on

advice for the total number of copies required, but **the current recommendation of the DoCS programme is to print a total of 40 copies of the thesis.**

- Some theses have coloured pages, and printing of them costs more than printing of black and white pages. The DoCS programme is ready to pay the printing costs of at **maximum 25 coloured pages** for each of the 40 copies of the theses. In case you want to print more than 40 books, then you must discuss with your supervisor who is going to pay the rest of the copies above 40. If no funding for the extra copies is available, contact Pirjo Moen on advice on additional funding.
- Unigrafia also gives an option of having a few copies of a one-sided print version of the thesis that is enclosed in a folder (dissertation folder/väitöskirjakansio). Such a version is usually not necessary, and the university or the DoCS programme **do not pay** the printing costs of these folder copies, if they are ordered.
- The doctoral candidate should contact Unigrafia in good time and check for [Unigrafia's page on the information for dissertations for the University of Helsinki](#). That page contains a link to the short guide for ordering the theses, and a link to a price calculator. **Not that Step 2 on that page of Unigrafia does not apply for doctoral candidates in Computer Science**, as the ISBN numbers for our theses must be applied from the Finnish ISBN centre (see Section 6 of this document).
- The theses are ordered using [the dissertation order form of Unigrafia](#). Here are some instructions on how to fill in that form:
 - **The invoice** that the DoCS programme is supposed to pay must be addressed to the programme. This invoice should have the text "**H924/wbs 7924133/Lyytinen**" as reference on the invoice, along with the name of the doctoral candidate. Give that text to field "Reference" **on the first page of the dissertation order form** (if you fill in the form in Finnish, to field "Viesti").
 - In the DoCS programme, the doctoral candidates usually make the interleaf pages between the original publications themselves. Remember, thus, to choose option "**No**" for the question on the interleaves (or "tabs with black border blocks and Roman numerals" as Unigrafia calls them).
 - In the PhD theses of the DoCS programme, the University of Helsinki publication series covers are used, and **NOT** for example, the Dissertation Universitatis Helsingiensis covers. These covers are made by Unigrafia based on the information filled into the dissertation order form (choose option "**Helsinki University publication series covers**").
 - Remember also to give the **correct ISSN numbers** of the series ("**1238-8645 (print)**" and "**2814-4031 (online)**") on the dissertation order form. If you can give there only one ISSN number, please, use there the ISSN number of the printed books.
 - When you order the theses from Unigrafia, please, remember to give them **in the message field of the order** (field "Additional information" on page 7 of

the dissertation form) the following text: "In addition to the printing costs support of the University of Helsinki, the Doctoral Programme in Computer Science pays for the printing costs of 20 extra copies of the thesis as well as, if needed, the printing costs of at maximum 25 coloured pages for all the 40 copies of the thesis. The reference to be used in that invoice is "**H924/wbs 7924133/Lyytinen**", and the name of the doctoral candidate should be visible in the invoice". The reference should also be given to field "Reference" on the first page of the dissertation order form.

- The order form automatically computes the university discount of about 120€ for the printing costs.
- You will then get an estimate for the costs above that amount of 120€. If you order the recommended number of copies and each copy has at most 25 coloured pages, then the invoice for the printing costs can be sent to the DoCS programme. The invoice for extra copies (above 40 copies) and extra coloured pages (above 25 pages) you must pay yourself, or you can ask funding from your supervisor.
- When the theses have been printed, you can pick them from Punamusta Oy (Koivuhaantie 2 A, Vantaa), or you can ask Unigrafia to deliver them to the Pick-up Point Kumpula (a cabinet in the room behind the office of the porters on the first floor of the Exactum building; there is a Unigrafia sign on the door of the cabinet; some delivery costs will then be applied). Agree the way of delivery with Unigrafia. Our programme pays also the delivery costs.

Note! Send the final PDF version of your thesis (for checking some technical details) to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi) **BEFORE** sending it to Unigrafia for printing. This technical check usually takes around one week, depending on the technical changes needed to the thesis.

Note 2! When you get a proof version of your thesis from Unigrafia, please, check carefully that everything is as it should be. Especially, check all the texts on the covers of the thesis. Also send the proof-reads to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi) for checking before accepting the proof-reads.

7 Distribution of the doctoral thesis

General information on distribution of the thesis copies can be found in "Instructions for students" at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications>. Remember to choose "Doctoral Programme in Computer Science" as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions. That page also contains distribution of the thesis as well as information needed for communications related to the public examination.

When the theses have been printed, you can pick them from Unigrafia in Punamusta Oy (Koivuhaantie 2 A, Vantaa), or you can ask Unigrafia to deliver them to the Pick-up Point Kumpula (a cabinet in the room behind the office of the porters on the first floor of the

Exactum building; some delivery costs will then be applied, but the DoCS programme will pay those costs). Agree the way of delivery with Unigrafia.

Please see the general guidelines of the University of Helsinki and the Faculty of Science (<https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications>) on printing and distributing theses **outside the department**. You should check with a representative of Unigrafia, which parts of the distribution they will handle. Usually, Unigrafia delivers 7 (6+1) extra copies of the thesis to the Finnish National Library (in the Faculty of Science only 6 copies). **The doctoral candidate is always responsible for the distribution of the copies of the Faculty of Science and the Helsinki University Library.** Those two copies can be delivered in person or sent by internal or external mail using the addresses given on the page mentioned above (Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme).

At the Department of Computer Science, you should distribute at least the following thesis copies:

- one copy to each of the coffee rooms (Exactum, B225, 2nd floor, Department) and (Exactum, A308, 3rd floor, HIIT),
- one copy for the vitrine ("museum") on the 2nd floor of Exactum (give this copy to Pirjo Moen), and
- one copy for the department's archives (also give this copy to Pirjo Moen).

In addition to the above, you can decide whom to send the thesis, e.g., to those who have contributed to the work, to researchers in the same field (abroad and at home), or to relatives and friends. It is also good to talk about this with your supervisor.

Custom also dictates that doctoral candidates write a dedication to dissertation copies given away. Our faculty recommends that this dedication is written on a card and enclosed with the thesis. To such a card you can, for example, write to whom the thesis is dedicated, short greetings and your name.

8 Public relations related to the doctoral thesis

General information on electronic publishing and communications (i.e., public relations) related to the public examinations and the doctoral theses can be found in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications>. Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme, so that you can see all the programme- and faculty-specific instructions.

You must fill in the doctoral dissertation form (<https://ethesis.helsinki.fi/en/lomake/vaitos/>) **at least three weeks before the public examination of the thesis**. For that, you also need to write a popular abstract related to your thesis either in Finnish or Swedish. Please read the instructions on the abstracts at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/publishing-dissertation-and-communications#paragraph-3323>. When the form has been submitted, the

information on the thesis will be added to the university's Helda repository and the information on the defence to the university's calendar of events.

For news articles on the web pages of the Department of Computer Science as well as for other communication on the public examination of your doctoral thesis at the department, you need to send

- the popular abstracts and the titles of your thesis both in Finnish and English,
- the date and place of the public examination, and
- the names of the opponent and the custos

to Pirjo Moen (pirjo.moen@helsinki.fi). For the news articles on the web pages of the department, a **photograph** of you is also needed. Please, send the photograph (preferably a landscape photograph) to Pirjo Moen together with the other information mentioned above.

If you believe that the topic of your thesis may be of interest to the media and the public, please, contact the Communications and Community Relations unit at the Kumpula Campus (comms-kumpula@helsinki.fi) for a possible press release.

If you are associated with Helsinki Institute for Information Technology HIIT, please, also send the popular abstract, date and place of the public examination, and the names of the opponent and the custos to the Communication Officer at HIIT. Also state clearly that you work at HIIT and would like the information to be published on HIIT's web site.

If you are associated with any other organisation (e.g., with Aalto University, a company, or another department at the University of Helsinki), you should also inform that organisation about the public examination of your doctoral thesis.

9 Organising the public examination

In preparing for the public examination of your doctoral thesis, you must follow the guidelines of the University of Helsinki (<https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/public-examination> and <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/arranging-public-examination>). The [Welcome to the public examination](#) page also contains a lot of useful information related to the public examinations. Here below are also some additional information related to public examinations in the DoCS programme.

9.1 The date and place of the public examination

When it is known when the pre-examiners' statements can be expected to arrive, the doctoral candidate and the supervisor of the doctoral candidate can agree on the date of the public examination with the opponent. This can preliminary be done even before the opponent and the other officers have been appointed by the Faculty of Science, and the doctoral candidate has got the permission to defend the thesis.

The doctoral candidate must book the auditorium for the public examination of the doctoral thesis through the university's facility services with the help of the doctoral student services of the Faculty of Science (kumpula-phd@helsinki.fi). This can be done as soon as the date of the public examination has been agreed and the permission for defending the thesis has been granted. See the current instructions on the page mentioned at the beginning of this section.

The doctoral student services of the faculty will know which auditoriums are suitable for public examinations. Some auditoriums that have frequently been used in the DoCS programme are, e.g., Auditoriums CK112 and B123 in Exactum, some other auditoriums in other buildings at the Kumpula campus, and auditoriums in the Main Building of the University of Helsinki, such as Auditorium Tekla Hultin (F3003) and Karolina Eskelin (U3032). The DoCS programme recommends using auditoriums in Exactum or elsewhere at the Kumpula campus, as there will probably be a larger audience attending the public examination there than, if the public examination is organised outside the campus.

Traditionally, public examinations started at 10 or 12 on weekdays and at 10 on Saturdays. The current recommendation of the University of Helsinki, however, is that the public examinations on weekdays should start at 13. The auditorium is usually booked for four hours (e.g., 12-16). The starting time of the public examinations are always announced with full hours, i.e., starting at 13, but in practice the examination will begin **a quarter past the given hour**.

The Faculty of Science will pay for the fee of the public examination place, so the doctoral candidate does not need to worry about those costs.

9.2 Costs of the opponent

The Faculty of Science pays a certain fee for the opponents for their work.

According to the currently instructions, the travelling and accommodation costs of the opponent should primarily be paid by the supervisor of the doctoral candidate. In case the supervisor does not have any suitable funding for this, the supervisor can ask for help from the head of the Department of Computer Science.

9.3 Dress code

The webpage [Welcome to the public examination](#) gives the official dress code for the public examinations. However, the dress code must always be discussed with the opponent and the custos.

If the chosen dress code is that males use tailcoats, then the current instructions say that the supervisor of the doctoral candidate should primarily pay for the hiring costs of a tailcoat of the opponent. In case the supervisor does not have any suitable funding for this, the supervisor can ask for help from the head of the Department of Computer Science.

9.4 Coffee after the public examination

Doctoral candidates usually invite the guests for coffee after the public examination. The menu usually consists of tea/coffee and cake, but there are other alternatives. The doctoral candidate will pay for the coffee, if not otherwise agreed with the supervisor. The Department of Computer Science does not pay these costs from the departmental funds.

To order, see <http://www.unicafe.fi>. The staff of Unicafe will know which facilities are suitable for the coffee service.

The doctoral candidate must estimate the number of guests, e.g., based on how many guests they have invited from outside the department, how many people at the department are interested in the topic area, how well known they are at the department, etc.

Unicafe will ask for an estimate of how long the public examination itself will last, but they know that it can be hard to give an exact time.

9.5 Programme of the public examination

Doctoral candidates must prepare a 20-minute presentation (lectio precursoria) of their work in general terms. Doctoral candidates should also discuss how the public examination progresses and how to act, etc, with their supervisor/custos beforehand. The page [Welcome to the public examination](#) describes the event and offers some frequently used phrases.

9.6 Guiding the opponent

The supervisor/custos takes care of guiding the opponent, especially foreign ones. The [Welcome to the public examination](#) page is a good aid for this, but the progress of the event itself, verbal cues, etc, should also be rehearsed just before the public examination. The custos will inform you how long the public examination will last. Most public examinations last 2-3 hours.

It is often useful for you and the opponent to chat for a moment before the public examination, especially if you do not already know each other.

9.7 Delivering of copies of the thesis

Doctoral candidates should deliver a few copies of their thesis to the public examination for the audience. If the theses must be transported, e.g., from Kumpula to the Main Building, you can use the internal mail service (for the return trip, too).

9.8 Organising a post-doctoral party ("karonkka")

The [Welcome to the public examination](#) page has an introduction to the 'karonkka' traditions, but every doctoral candidate may organise their own party as they see fit. You can search for suitable locations for the party, for example, on [the website of](#)

[Helsinki](#). Doctoral candidates are responsible for all the costs of the post-doctoral party, organised for the honour of the opponent.

10 Approval of the doctoral thesis and applying for the diploma

General information on grading of the doctoral theses can be found in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/article/grading-dissertation>. Remember to choose “Doctoral Programme in Computer Science” as the degree programme, so that you can see all the faculty-specific instructions. Since the 1st of August 2025, the theses will be evaluated using grading scale “Pass/Fail”. However, if the pre-examination of your thesis was started before the 1st of August, then grading scale “Pass with distinction/Pass/Fail” is still used.

The opponent and the grading committee must submit their statements to the Faculty of Science no later than one week after the defence (previously two weeks). You will get that information from the Faculty, and you have the right to submit your objections to the statements before a decision on the approval of your doctoral thesis is made. If the pre-examination process of your thesis started after the 1st of August 2025 and the statements are unanimous, the decision of the approval will be made by the Dean of the Faculty of Science. If there is something unclear in the statement or if the pre-examination process of your thesis started before the 1st of August 2025, then the decision on the approval will be made by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Science.

As soon as you know, when your thesis will be approved, and you want to graduate, you can apply for graduation and the PhD Degree Diploma from the Faculty of Science in the SISU system. See more detailed information in “Instructions for students” at <https://studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/graduating-doctor>.

(Document last updated on 21.10.2025 by P. Moen)