



Guidelines for organizing the thesis / internship report defense and follow-up

Adopted by the IHDS Scientific Committee in December 2022

As outlined in the document “Guidelines for internship reports, academic and internship-based theses, and their evaluation,”¹ obtaining academic credits for a thesis or internship report is subject to a public defense.

The purpose of this document is to guide students and supervisors in the preparation and follow-up of this defense.

1. Confirming the thesis jury

All theses must be evaluated by at least two persons. In the case of internship-based theses and internship reports, this includes the academic supervisor and the internship supervisor. In the case of academic theses, the student(s) and the supervisor should discuss options for a second juror and, ideally, decide together; in case of a disagreement, a decision is made by the academic supervisor.

The academic supervisor and internship supervisor (or academic thesis juror) must participate in the defense and sign the grade report form (see point 6. below).

2. Deciding on the defense date and preparing the grade reporting form

The date for the defense is to be decided jointly by the student(s) and supervisor(s).

You should plan this well in advance since the defense has to take place at least ten days before the grade submission deadline² and the final manuscript has to be shared with the supervisors at least three weeks before the defense.

The student(s) complete the grade report form³ with their names and student registration number(s) as well as the name of the internship supervisor, if relevant, and send the form to the academic supervisor.

As a general guideline, you should count on sharing your final manuscript as follows:

- beginning of January for a defense to be credited in the Fall semester
- End of May for a defense to be credited in the Spring semester (ordinary session)
- mid-August for a Fall defense to be credited in the Spring semester (make-up session)

¹ Available on the website of the Geneva School of Social Sciences and the Moodle page of the IHDS Master’s.

² Since the exact date changes every year by a few days, you should check the academic calendar on the website of the Geneva School of Social Sciences or with the academic advisor

³ Available on the website of the Geneva School of Social Sciences and the Moodle page of the IHDS Master’s.

3. Defining participation at the defense

The defense of your thesis or internship report is public, but if there are reasons to limit participation for reasons of confidentiality linked to the substance of a thesis or internship report, a closed defense can be organized.

The decision to organize a public or closed defense should be taken jointly by the student(s) and supervisors. In the case of an internship-based thesis or internship report, the internship supervisor has the final word.

4. Location, room reservation, and defense announcement

Defenses should be organized in the physical presence of the student(s) and supervisor(s) if circumstances allow. Online defenses are possible but should be exceptional.

Once the defense date and level of participation are agreed, the academic supervisor assumes the responsibility for reserving an appropriate room; support for this should be sought from the secretariat of the supervisor's home department or institute, not MIHDS program staff.

Should the defense be organized at the internship supervisor's facilities, he or she takes care of reservations and logistics.

In case of an online defense, the responsibility for creating the necessary access links goes to the student(s).

All technical support for necessary infrastructure (e.g., computer, beamer, internet access) and logistics (e.g., building access, keys) is the responsibility of the academic supervisor.

5. Announcing the event

Announcing the public defense and inviting colleagues, friends, and family is the joint responsibility of the concerned student(s) and supervisor(s) – no formal announcement is made by the MIHDS program but e-mail list addresses can be shared upon request.

6. Defense proceedings

The specific approach to and program of the defense are agreed in advance by the student(s) and the academic supervisor.

That said, a defense should include, at a minimum:

- a 20-30 minute presentation of the manuscript (depending on the number of students)
- at least 30 minutes of comments, questions, and a responses
- jury deliberation
- feedback by the jury and announcement of the grade

7. Recording the grade

At the conclusion of the defense, the members of the jury (academic supervisor, internship supervisor or juror) announce the grade, complete the grade report form, and sign it.

To recall, the defense counts for 20% of the thesis / internship report grade.⁴

⁴ See "Guidelines for internship reports, academic and internship-based theses, and their evaluation" for a full explanation of the grading approach for theses and internship reports.

The academic supervisor submits the completed and signed grade report sheet to the SDS Student Secretariat (secretariat-etudiants-sds@unige.ch) with the academic advisor Ms. Yali Chen (yali.chen@unige.ch) and the MIHDS administrative coordinator Sandrine Billeau (sandrine.billeau@unige.ch) in copy.

8. Finalizing and submitting the thesis / internship report

All theses and internship reports that obtain a grade of 5 and above are published in the UNIGE Open Archive (*Archive ouverte* - <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/>).

Students must complete the Authorization form⁵ and send it along with the final version of their work in pdf to the academic advisor and the MIHDS program assistant Ms. Sandrine Billeau (sandrine.billeau@unige.ch), who will take care of the publication.

9. Ethics review

Starting in October 2022, the Geneva School of Social Sciences requires all Master's students to carry out a reflection on the ethical dimensions of their work; this applies to all MIHDS students whose thesis or internship report was not initiated by that date. Three videos available on the G3S website provide guidance on the key issues of the ethics review.

Concretely, students must complete the form "Self-analysis of the ethical dimensions of the Master's thesis or internship report" available on the G3S website in collaboration with the academic supervisor. For group theses or internship reports, only one form is to be completed.

The completed form has to be approved by the academic supervisor, who sends it to the G3S Research Ethics Review Committee (ethique-autoevaluation@unige.ch) prior to the defense.

⁵ Available on the website of the Geneva School of Social Sciences and the Moodle page of the IHDS Master's. Please note that this form also has to be signed by the supervisors, especially the internship advisor.