

Pre-defense

The idea of a pre-defense is to provide students with an experience of defending the thesis before the actual defense takes place, so one would feel more confident at the real defense.

Also, the feedback one receives at the pre-defense will help students to improve their thesis before the final submission.

BA thesis pre-defense procedure:

A chair can decide to organize a pre-defense of a BA thesis.

The pre-defense procedure is the following:

- introduction of the thesis by the candidate (up to 10 minutes);
- reviewer's general comments on the thesis
- academic debate between the reviewer and the candidate (up to 10 minutes);
- questions from the audience;
- candidate's final word.

The reviewer at the defense will also be the reviewer at the pre-defense. A pre-defense lasts up to 35 minutes.

MA thesis pre-defense procedure:

All MA theses in the international curriculum have pre-defenses. A chair can decide to have a pre-defense of a thesis written in the Estonian-taught curriculum. Pre-defenses are organized by the chair and the presence of all members of the chair is highly recommended.

A pre-defense lasts up to 40 minutes.

The procedure is the following:

- introduction of the thesis by the candidate (up to 15 minutes);
- reviewer's general comments on the thesis
- academic debate between the reviewer and the candidate (up to 10 minutes);
- questions from the audience;
- candidate's final word.

BA and MA thesis defense procedure:

- 1) supervisor's comments on the supervision process and the wider context of the thesis (up to 5 minutes);
- 2) introduction of the thesis by the candidate (up to 10 minutes for BA and 15 minutes for MA thesis);
- 3) reviewer's general comments on the thesis;
- 4) academic debate between the candidate and the reviewer;
- 5) questions from the committee and the audience;
- 6) candidate's final word;
- 7) closed meeting of the committee;
- 8) announcement of the committee's decision.

The introduction should describe the thesis statement / question of the thesis and the key argument(s) for that thesis / in defending an answer to that question. But the introduction should be accessible to the audience present -- even if they have not read the thesis. Selected further details can be explored in the exchange with the reviewer. If the thesis introduction exceeds the time limit then the committee has the right to interrupt and move on to the next step of the procedure.

Depending upon the time available, the committee reserves the right to delay (7) and (8) until later on in the day, so as to ensure that all defenses are completed on schedule.

The committee grades the thesis taking into account the opinions of the reviewer and the supervisor and the discussion during the defense. A BA defense lasts up to 60 minutes and an MA defense up to 75 minutes.

The head of the defense committee is responsible for ensuring that the proceedings of the defense conform to these guidelines.