UGA COLLÈGE DOCTORAL	**Guideline** Applicable to jury proposals submitted to the Doctoral School as of 1/11/2021 **Updated: 10/14/2021**	**Doctoral Studies**

Jury and thesis defense: rules and recommendations

This document conveys the application of articles 18 and 19 of the ministerial Decree of May 25, 2016 within the UGA, which concern the thesis jury and the conditions of thesis defense, and of the Decree of October 27, 2020 concerning the use of videoconferencing for presenting work within the framework of an accreditation to direct research (HDR) and a thesis defense.

I. Choice of external referees (rapporteurs)

The two external referees must be accredited to direct research (HDR) or HDR[(1)]equivalent, from outside the Grenoble Alpes site, the laboratory, and the Doctoral School in which the PhD student is enrolled, and must not be involved in the thesis (no involvement in the scientific supervision of the thesis, no joint publication with the PhD student). In the case of a co-supervision, they cannot belong to the establishments that signed the agreement, unless there is a specific clause in the agreement. It is not necessary that the external referees are members of the thesis defense jury.

II. Rules for thesis defense jury composition

Members

1. The jury must consist of at least 4 members and no more than 8 (including the thesis supervisor), at least half of whom must be from outside the PhD student's institution, the affiliated organizations, the laboratory and the doctoral school, and at least half of whom must be University Professors (PR) or equivalent level of researcher (PRA)[(2)]. At least three members of the Jury must be involved in the decision; the supervisor (or co-supervisor, if applicable) does not take part in the jury's deliberations.

2. The jury must include at least one UGA academic, either a senior lecturer (maître de conference HDR) or a university professor, who was not involved in the thesis supervision.

3. The jury must include at least one member with the status of Professor in a public institution of higher education that is accredited to award PhDs in France[(3)], or equivalent in a university outside France[(4)].

4. An individual who has a PhD but who does not work in academia may serve as a member of the jury. If he or she is not a Doctor, this person may only take part in the defense as an invited member. Exceptions are possible on the condition that the latter is not involved in the thesis. These exceptions require the individual's full resume and a detailed justification by the thesis supervisor.

5. Except in exceptional or special cases, the thesis advisors [(5)] can only attend the thesis defense as guests. Their role in the supervision team during the preparation of the thesis must be stated on the thesis cover and in any communication related to the defense. They are not counted as

members of the jury and therefore not included in the ratios. They may be asked to speak at the thesis defense, upon invitation of the jury President.

Recommendation:

It is highly recommended that a jury of at least 5 members (including the thesis supervisor) be formed with at least 3 external members and 3 University Professors (PR) or equivalent level of researcher (PRA).

Local to external member ratio

6. At least half the jury must be external members, i.e. not affiliated with a Grenoble Alpes site institution or doctoral school, and who have not been involved in the thesis.

7. If the thesis supervisor or co-supervisor is a member of the thesis jury, they are considered as local members of the jury.

8. A thesis co-supervisor [(5)] affiliated with an organization outside the Grenoble site and the doctoral school may be a member of the thesis jury. They are considered as local members of the jury.

9. An individual who does not work in academia (even in Grenoble) is considered as an external member if they are not involved in the thesis.

Ratio of Professors or equivalent level of researcher (PRA)/non- Professors or equivalent

10. At least half of the jury must consist of University Professors or equivalent. Professors and researchers on secondment from their parent institution are not included in the 50% quota of University Professors or equivalent and may not be chairpersons of the PhD defense jury, except when they are on secondment to an institution whose members are equivalent to University Professors. The specific case of personnel from institutions with which the UGA has signed agreements is covered by point 14 below.

11. An emeritus member (University Professor, Research Director or Senior Lecturer (MCF) can invoke his or her HDR degree (accreditation to direct research) to be an external referee (rapporteur) or examiner for a thesis. However, he/she cannot use his/her University Professor or equivalent rank. Consequently, he/she cannot be president of the jury.

12. An honorary or retired professor may serve as an examiner on a jury, but may not serve as an external referee (rapporteur) or jury president.

Special cases

13. A brief resume (notably mentioning thesis supervisions and the exact academic title in the country of practice[(4)]) is requested for each non-French individual, or each individual chosen for his or her expertise, outside the academic world in order to assess their status on the jury.

14. In accordance with the cooperation agreement between the UGA and the CEA dated July 15, 2020, and in compliance with Article 6 of Decree 92-70, engineers at level E5 (and higher) who are accredited to direct research (HDR) and hold the title of Academic (Enseignant-Chercher) at the UGA (teaching the equivalent of 32 hours of tutorials minimum per year) will be considered Professors or equivalent (PRA), as well as those performing their duties in research units of public

higher education institutions under the authority of the French higher education minister and those who are members of one of the boards of directors of public higher education institutions under the authority of the French higher education minister or of university faculties.

Presidency

15. The president of the jury is a University Professor or equivalent, and must be a member of a University or a UMR research lab, or a member of a French EPST (Public Scientific and Technical Research Establishment). He/she cannot be a supervisor of the thesis.

III. Equality

Jury composition must ensure a balanced representation of women and men (Art. 18 of the May 2016 Decree). As this balance is difficult to achieve in certain disciplines, a reasonable expectation is that there will be at least one woman and one man on each jury.

A regular assessment will be made to detect possible deviations and to ensure that jury gender representation is statistically comparable to that of the relevant CNU (French National Council of Universities) sections.

IV. Cotutelle thesis

The above rules can be relaxed for cotutelle thesis. The proportion of external members can be lower (at least 1/3). However, except in very specific cases mentioned in the agreement, the rules concerning the external referees (2 external referees accredited to direct research (HDR) or equivalent) and the proportion of University Professors or equivalent must be respected. In the case of cotutelle thesis, a supervisor or co-supervisor from the partner university is considered as a local member.

V. Use of video-conferencing

The use of video-conferencing is governed by article 2 of the Decree of October 27, 2020.
"By way of exception, the president or dean of the institution, after consulting the dean of the doctoral school, at the suggestion of the thesis supervisor, may authorize the PhD student and the members of the jury, in whole or in part, to participate in the thesis defense by any telecommunication means that ensures their identification and guarantees their effective, continuous and simultaneous participation in the debates as well as the confidentiality of the jury's deliberations. The technical means used must ensure that the debates are public".

The request for full videoconferencing will be made at the time of submission of the defense dossier via the designated form.

In case of partial videoconferencing (to be mentioned on the jury proposal form), it should be noted that the jury president and the PhD student must be physically in the same room.

The same rules apply for HDR (accredited to direct research) juries.

VI. Deliberation

Deliberation must be conducted in two stages:

- The first, during which all jury members can contribute additional useful elements.
- The second, during which the thesis supervisors may be invited by the jury president to leave the deliberation room or, if they are allowed to stay, not to intervene in the final decision to award the PhD.

These rules will be attached to the defense dossier for submission to the jury president, who will lead the discussions in the manner he or she deems appropriate.

VII. Thesis defense record and report signatures

1. The thesis defense record is signed by all members of the jury with the exception the thesis supervisor(s).
2. The thesis defense report is signed by all jury members. The report should include the following statement: "The admission decision was taken by the members of the jury, excluding the thesis supervisors, invited supervisors and guests, who were not deliberating".
3. Guests do not sign the thesis defense record or the report.
4. When video-conferencing was used by a jury member, the President indicates on the thesis defense record "Video-conference" and signs in the remote jury member's place, "P.O. Mr. /Mrs. X". As for the thesis defense report, the president signs, "P.O. Mr. /Mrs. X". The request to participate in the jury by videoconference must be made before the defense, and attached to the defense record. The signatures "P.O. Mr. /Mrs. X" have the same value as the signatures of the members present.
5. A jury member who is absent during the defense (without videoconference) does not sign the thesis defense record or the report. The President states "Absent" on the thesis defense record.
6. Any handwritten modification of the jury members' positions, ranks or addresses is strictly forbidden [(6)].
7. The thesis defense record must clearly state the place and time of the defense.

VIII. Jury member absence management.

General rule: preference should be given to the use of videoconferencing, within the limits set out in paragraph V.

Thesis defense jury member absence without access to videoconferencing:

1. Provided the constraints of the jury's validity are still respected, the defense can take place. The absent members are declared as such on the defense record and do not sign the record.
2. If the jury is no longer valid due to declared absences, and if time permits, its composition can be modified to re-establish its validity. The new composition must be submitted to the doctoral school for validation as soon as possible and the new defense record must be issued for signature at the end of the thesis defense.
3. If the unexpected absence of a jury member is declared shortly before the defense without the possibility of replacing him/her to ensure the validity of the jury, participation in the defense by telephone is permissible. The president will apply the same procedure as in the case of a videoconference.
4. If a telephone solution is not possible in the above situation, the thesis defense must be postponed.

Examples of jury composition are provided in Appendix 2.

FOOTNOTES

(1)

a. The HDR (accredited to direct research) equivalence for a non-French academic is acquired by default for international colleagues whose functions are equivalent to University Professors ("Arrêté du 10/2/2011" document). A resume indicating the exact status and the record of research and PhD supervision activities of these colleagues is required when compiling the defense dossier.

b. For colleagues who do not fall into this category: Assessment of the legitimacy of a non-French colleague to be an external referee for a thesis must be analyzed by the HDR committee of the relevant doctoral school. The latter is best able to determine the relevance of the colleague's file to the requirements for being authorized to defend an HDR within this doctoral school.

Criteria that can be used as a basis for analysis include:
- A decade of experience in R&D,
- Good publication record
- Experience in PhD supervision, e.g. through publications with PhD students.
- Relevance of experience in the specific field related to the thesis

(2) The status of University Professor or equivalent for a PhD thesis defense jury at the Université Grenoble-Alpes is defined according to the decree of June 15, 1992.

(3) As indicated on the MESRI website : https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid148415/etablissements-enseignement-superieur-francais-accredites-delivrer-doctorat.html

(4) For non-French individuals: exact title in the language of origin and equivalence in accordance with the Decree of 10/2/2011.

(5) The status of thesis supervisor or co-supervisor can only be given to a University Professor or equivalent, to a person holding the HDR accreditation to direct research, or benefiting from a specific dispensation granted by the Commission des Dispenses et Dérogations Doctorales (CD3) after approval by the PhD student's doctoral school HDR committee, and validated by the Academic Council's research commission (article 16 of the Decree of May 25, 2016) Any person supervising the thesis who does not meet these conditions is considered an advisor.

(6) In the event of an error in the names, positions, ranks or addresses of one or more jury members, the president may request a correction on a separate slip. A change in the rank or position of a jury member may lead to the validity of the jury being called into question.

Appendix 1: List of regulatory texts used to draft this document

- *Decree n°84-431 of June 6, 1984 determining the common statutory provisions applicable to academics and establishing the special status of the body of university professors and the body of lecturers.*

- *Decree n°92-70 of January 16, 1992 concerning the French National Council of Universities*

- *Decree of June 15, 1992 determining the list of civil servants assimilated to university professors and lecturers for the designation of members of the French National Council of Universities*

- *Decree of February 10, 2011 concerning the equivalence scale of titles, works and positions of academics mentioned in articles 22 and 43 of decree n° 84-431 of June 6, 1984 fixing the common statutory provisions applicable to academics and laying down the special status of the body of university professors and the body of lecturers*

- *Decree of May 25, 2016 establishing the national framework for studies and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree*

- *Decree of October 27, 2020 concerning the use of video-conferencing for the presentation of work in the context of an accreditation to direct research and a thesis defense*

Appendix 2: Examples of jury composition

Example 1: A standard jury with 5 members including the thesis supervisor. There are therefore at least 3 external members and 3 University Professors or equivalent. If an external member is absent, the jury will remain valid with 4 members including 2 external members and at least 2 University Professors or equivalent

Example 2: A jury with 6 (8) members including 3(4) external members. In case of absence of an external member, an internal member (for example the thesis supervisor) must withdraw from the jury. The condition concerning University Professors or equivalent must be fulfilled.

Example 3: A jury with 4 members, 2 of whom are external. If an external member is absent (even an external referee - rapporteur), the defense is postponed. If an internal member is absent, he/she can be replaced at short notice by another internal member, subject to the agreement of the dean of the doctoral school and the balance between University Professors and the equivalent level of researcher.