

Guidelines for the “*Rigorosum*” (Doctoral Study Catholic Theology)

The examination board usually consists of three people: the Chair of the Doctoral Program (or the representative of the Chair), the doctoral supervisor, and an expert reviewer or a representative for the subject of specialization. The total length of the defense is 1 hour maximum. The defense consists of the following parts:

1. **Short presentation of the findings of the dissertation by the doctoral candidate** (maximum 15 minutes! – then cutoff): Above all, the presentation should answer the proposed research questions and especially focus on each part of the dissertation which demonstrates progress from or improvement upon previous research.
2. **Defense of the thesis** (around 20 minutes): The starting point will be passages which were critiqued by the dissertation reviewers. The doctoral candidate has the chance to reply to these critiques. Following this, the members of the examination board are able to pose additional critical questions on the coherence and scope of specific findings of the dissertation. If possible, these questions will be posed in such a way that requires the candidate to present arguments for their results.
3. **The theological contextualization of the work** and its results, especially from the perspective of the dissertation subject and the specialization subject (10 minutes each): The members of the examination committee should pose a sufficient amount of open but clear questions in order to provide the examinee with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of current theological discourse, or to place the results of their specific research in the larger theological context (i.e., overview questions as opposed to specific questions). It is recommended that the examinee establish contact with the expert examiners beforehand, so that they are made aware of the range of overarching themes (at least three per subject) which are possible discussion topics for the examination.