

Introduction

Notice: Schedule, deadlines, and procedures for PhD students' end-of-year exams

The official guidelines approved during the Academic Board meeting on September 14, 2026, regarding the conclusion of the current academic year, have been published. The attached documents outline all general and specific deadlines, exam session schedules, and the evaluation criteria for advancing to the next year or for admission to the final exam.

Specifically, the attachments cover:

- Instructions for submitting annual reports and the organization of assessment exams.
- Exceptions and schedule adjustments for students with extensions, suspensions, or supernumerary status.
- Organizational details for the "POSTER Day" dedicated to first-year students.
- The procedure for third-year students preparing for external evaluation and their thesis defense.
- The composition of the 2026 Examination Committees.

All PhD students are strongly encouraged to carefully review the documents to ensure they properly fulfill the required obligations and meet the deadlines for their specific cycle.

Notice: Schedule, Deadlines, and Procedures for Year-End Exams

PhD students are hereby informed regarding the deadlines, the exam schedule, and the evaluation criteria for the conclusion of the current academic year. Please note that the year-end exams aim to assess and evaluate the effective completion of training activities and research progress.

Provisions for extensions, suspensions, and supernumerary status: timelines are adapted as follows for those who have requested adjustments to their program:

- **PhD students with an extension request:** all general deadlines regarding the submission of the annual report and year-end exams remain unchanged. The only exception is the submission of the thesis and the related final exam, whose deadlines will be postponed according to the granted extension months.
- **PhD students with a suspension or supernumerary status:** for these categories, the entire schedule of deadlines (including the submission of the report, year progression exams, and thesis submission) is delayed proportionally to the months of suspension taken or correlated to the specific start date of their activities. Those concerned are requested to refer to their updated individual schedule.

1. General Deadlines and Exam Schedule

All PhD students (with the exceptions noted above) are required to adhere to the following timelines:

- **By October 9, 2026:** submission of the report on the activities carried out during the past year to the coordinator (and in CC to maria.marinelli@unipi.it). [The official template for drafting the document is available for download on this page].
- **Between October 12 and 26, 2026:** tentative period for the exam sessions. The candidate presents the activities carried out over the past year to a committee appointed by the Doctoral Board. The committee chairs will communicate the dates and rooms.
- **Late October / Early November:** meeting of the Doctoral Board to discuss the evaluations and formally admit each PhD student to the following year.

2. POSTER Day – 1st Year Students (Cycle XLI)

For first-year students, the usual POSTER session is scheduled, representing a fundamental moment to present their research activities.

- **Date and Location:** Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at the Aula Magna “U. Dini” of the School of Engineering.
- **Organization:** the event is organized by Prof. Chiara Magliaro, with the support of Dr. Andrea Motroni. Further organizational details will be communicated directly to those involved by Prof. Chiara Magliaro.
- **Please note:** participation in the POSTER session will entail reduced time for the subsequent formal presentation to the committee, but it will not alter the process and validity of the exam procedure in any way.

3. Evaluation Criteria for Year Progression

Progression to the following year is subject to meeting specific minimum evaluation criteria verified by the Committees. It is understood that serious shortcomings or strongly negative evaluations expressed by the supervisor may lead to the early termination of the PhD program.

- **Admission from 1st to 2nd year:** It is essential to have acquired most of the required training credits, equivalent to approximately three-quarters of the total (i.e., 25-26 credits). Candidates must clearly outline their research plan for the following year. Having already presented one or two papers at conferences is considered an asset.
- **Admission from 2nd to 3rd year:** Training obligations must be substantially completed; any credit deficits exceeding 6-7 credits will be formally reported. Regarding scientific production, the minimum requirement is at least one or two papers presented at peer-reviewed international conferences, combined with a solid future research plan. Research periods abroad are strongly recommended and constitute a highly positive evaluation factor.

- **Admission to the final exam (end of 3rd year):** To obtain clearance to forward the thesis to the reviewers, the student must have fulfilled all training obligations. To complete the program, a minimum body of publications is required, including two or three papers presented at international conferences (peer-reviewed) and at least one article in an international journal (peer-reviewed), either already published or officially accepted.

Committee Procedure: The Committees will examine the acquired credits (internal and external) and the scientific production of each candidate. After consulting the supervisor (internal and possibly external), the Committee will draft a synthetic admission judgment using the appropriate template and assign a final evaluation (insufficient, sufficient, fair, good, excellent). For students unable to participate in person because they are off-site on a mission officially authorized by the Coordinator, the option to take the exam online will be guaranteed.

2026 Admission Exam Committees

AUT: **Manolo Garabini** (Presidente), Andrea Munafò, Gabriele Fortunato (membro supplente Matteo Bianchi),

BIO: **Carmelo De Maria** (Presidente), Alejandro Callara, Giuseppe Barillaro (membro supplente Chiara Magliaro)

ELE: **Gianluca Fiori** (Presidente), Sebastiano Strangio, Alessio Giorgetti (membro supplente Paolo Bruschi)

INF: **Mario Cimino** (Presidente), Giovanni Nardini, Franco Angelini (membro supplente Giuseppe Lettieri)

TLC/EM: **Sabrina Greco** (Presidente), Danilo Brizi, Carlo Vallati (membro supplente Andrea Michel)

4. Specific Deadlines for 3rd Year Students (Cycle XXXIX)

PhD students concluding their third year on October 31, 2026 (subject to the aforementioned suspensions or extensions) must strictly adhere to the following procedure for the final exam:

Admission Phase:

- **By October 31, 2026:** Submission of the formal request for admission to the final exam via the Alice portal at the following link:
<https://www.unipi.it/didattica/corsi/dottorati/dottorandi/esame-finale-del-dottorato/>
- **By October 31, 2026:** Submission of the thesis draft to the Coordinator to obtain the Doctoral Board's approval for forwarding it to the external reviewers.

External Evaluation:

- **By November 30, 2026:** Doctoral Board's approval to send the thesis to the reviewers. In case of non-approval, the PhD student will have two months to produce a new version.
- **By December 31, 2026:** Receipt of evaluations from the reviewers. In case of a positive outcome (including "Minor Revision"), the final version will be drafted. If substantial modifications are required, up to 6 additional months may be granted.

Discussion and Final Exam: Once the Judging Committee is appointed, the exam date will be set within the following 90 days.

- **At least 3 days before the exam:** Mandatory upload to the ETD portal of the final thesis, the activity report, and the electronic title page.
- **Committee Evaluation:** sufficient, good, excellent, or excellent with honors (awarded only unanimously).
- **Within 10 days of the discussion:** Submission to the Coordinator of the summary report covering the three years of the PhD (using the specific template available on the website).