



## *The PhD program in Physics @ UZH*

- ▶ Some general info
- ▶ Initial procedures
- ▶ The PhD Committee
- ▶ Teaching duties
- ▶ Credit points
- ▶ The steps before the PhD discussion

## ► Some general info

- The “natural” duration of the PhD program is 4 years. *Shorter/longer programs are possible (if recommended & approved by the PhD committee), but this should be an exception.*  
*Very special circumstances allow a PhD duration beyond 5 years.*
- You (PhD students) have a special twofold role: you are both students and researchers [*don't forget it...!*]  
*What we discuss in this presentation are essentially only matters related to your role as PhD “students”.*
- Some key figures/bodies during your PhD studies:
  1. The supervisor(s)
  2. The PhD Committee ( → *important role, more later* )
  3. The responsible of the PhD program (*soon will be Ben Kilminster*)  
and the Managing Director of the Institute (*Katharina Müller*)*If you have any problem, you should involve them in this order (till the problem is solved...)*

## ▶ Initial procedures

Your twofold role as students & researches implies the initial procedure has two independent steps:

- I. work contract with the Physik Insitut [PI] (→HR secretaries) or other affiliated research institutes (PSI, ...)
- II. the enrollment as PhD student at the Science Faculty (MNF) of UZH (→ access to the PhD student admin tool)

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N.B.:

- Step1 does not imply step 2 !
- In case of problems, the support for 2 is Denise Caneve (admin support @ PI)
- The completion of step 2 defines the  $t=0$  of your PhD program
- In our Department the duration of the work contract (step1) is always 1 year (renewable)

## ► Initial procedures

- Once you complete step 2 (enrollment), you need to indicate soon [  $t=0...$  ] in the PhD admin tool both
  - I. The Main Advisor (= supervisor) – *the person who selected you for the position, and who will be your main guide and reference during the PhD*
  - II. The Head of PhD Committee – *often the same as I, unless I is not a member of the Faculty with the right to confer PhD . In such cases it must be one of professors at the PI*
- After these initial steps, there are 6 months of time to prepare the Doctoral agreement & indicate all members of the PhD Committee

## ► The PhD Committee

The PhD Committee has a very important role: it will provide an independent (regular) check of how the PhD is progressing.

Among other things, the PhD Committee

- approves the start of the procedures for the final discussion,
- could decide if the PhD should terminate before the completion (*it happens rarely, but it happens...*),
- could propose modifications of the Doctoral Agreement (= PhD plan).

Most important, is the body that should help solving problems before they reach a critical level...

## ▶ The PhD Committee

- By default the PhD Committee is formed by 3 members, but there can be more. One of them must be a member of the PI not directly involved in your supervision (important to provide independent advise) → *check this, when the committee is formed.*
- The PhD Committee should meet at least once per year (reminder by the PhD admin tool, to both student and supervisor) → *ensure this happens*

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- The PhD Committee should meet at least once per year (reminders by the PhD admin tool are sent to both student and supervisor) → *ensure this happens*
- During each meeting of the PhD Committee you should have the opportunity to discuss – without the supervisor(s) – with the other members of the committee → *ensure this happens*
- In case of problems (*related to the PhD...*) don't hesitate to contact any of the members of the PhD Committee also outside the official meetings
- It is a duty of the student to upload the minutes of the PhD Comm. Meetings → *please do so without delays* (*defines  $\Delta t$  for next meeting*)



## ► Teaching duties

- Teaching is a mandatory part of our PhD program.
- General principles:
  - PhD students should teach 6 semesters over 4 years;
  - the amount of time devoted to teaching (**including preparation, corrections,...**) should not exceed, on average, 1 day/week during the semester (**→ less than 0.5/week over the full year, when averaged over the whole PhD duration**);
  - teaching exceeding 70 nominal hours per semester should be compensated.
- Since 2024 we have put in place a specific set of rules to ensure these general principle are implemented in a fair & transparent way (***as much as possible...***)

## ► Teaching duties

- Since 2024 we have put in place a specific set of rules to ensure these general principle are implemented in a fair & transparent way:

### 1) Number of semesters.

PhD students are expected to contribute to the teaching activities of the Physics Department working as TA for at least 6 semesters (*exceptions specified in rule n.8*).

### 2) Evaluation of the teaching load.

The teaching load of the TAs is quantified based on fixed reference workloads for the various courses, which can amount to **40, 60, 80, 100** nominal hours per semester, depending on the course.

An official list of the reference workload for all courses at the Physics Department is made available to all TAs. Only the contributions to courses or services that are reported in this official list is considered for the estimate of the teaching load

### 3) Teaching assignment.

The courses are assigned according to needs of the Physics Department, possibly taking into account student wishes.

## ► Teaching duties

### 4) Financial compensation.

A workload exceeding 70 hours per semester gives rise to financial compensation at the end of the semester.

### 5) Eligibility to teaching-free semester in case of high teaching load.

Students who have been teaching for at least 360 hours, after 4 semesters, are eligible for a teaching-free semester (which corresponds to a reduction of the minimum number of teaching semesters from 6 to 5). However, this is granted only if and when compatible with the teaching needs of the Department.

### 6) Teaching beyond 6 semesters in case of low teaching load.

Students who have been teaching for 300 hours or less after 6 semesters are required to teach also a 7<sup>th</sup> semester, without financial compensation (unless exceeding 70 hours, as specified in rule n.3) and/or perform some equivalent service work for the Department.



## ► Teaching duties

### 7) Voluntary teaching beyond 6 semesters.

Students who have been teaching for 6 semesters and more than 300 hours can teach additional semesters on a voluntary basis, depending on Department needs, provided the agreement of the PhD supervisor. If the total teaching hours exceed 420, each hour of additional teaching is paid.

### 8) Reduced teaching

- Students not employed by the Physics Department are required to teach only 3 semesters
- Students whose PhD contract last 3 to 3.5 years are required to teach only 5 semesters (*and progressively less for shorter durations*)
- The teaching duty of students with cotutelle agreements, or with special mobility fellowships, or whose supervisors have special agreements with other Institutes, are discussed on a case-by-case basis.

## ► Credit points

Students should earn 12 ECTS credit points before starting the procedure for graduation.

Criteria to earn the points:

- School/workshops: 1 credit point per week of participation + 1 additional point for presentation or poster;
- Attendance of Master courses at UZH or ETHZ: full credits of the course if the exam is taken, half points for attendance only (registration to the course in PHYxxx/DP format);
- Joint UZH+ETH PhD Seminar for particle physics (as for workshops)
- Advanced courses at other universities or institutions: ~ 1 credit / 30 hours;
- Language and soft skills courses: ~ 1 credit / 30 hours

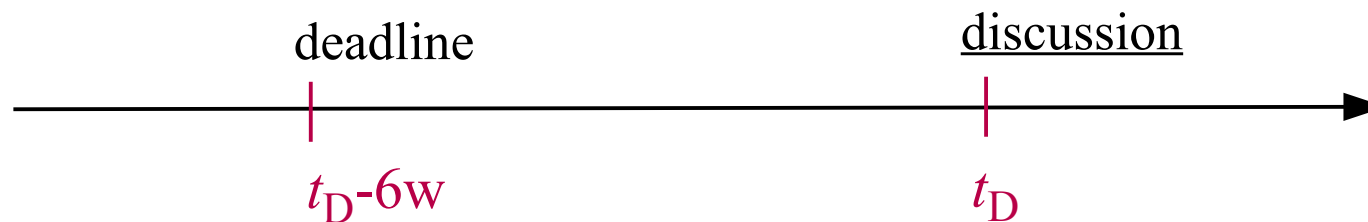
Maximal points for each category:

- Max. 3 ECTS credits may be earned with language and soft skills courses;
- Max. 6 ECTS credits from conferences (*attendance + talks or posters*)

► The steps before the PhD discussion

The green light to proceed with the discussion should come from the last PhD committee (assuming a normal duration of 4 years, this is decided by the PhD committee held at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> yr / beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> yr)

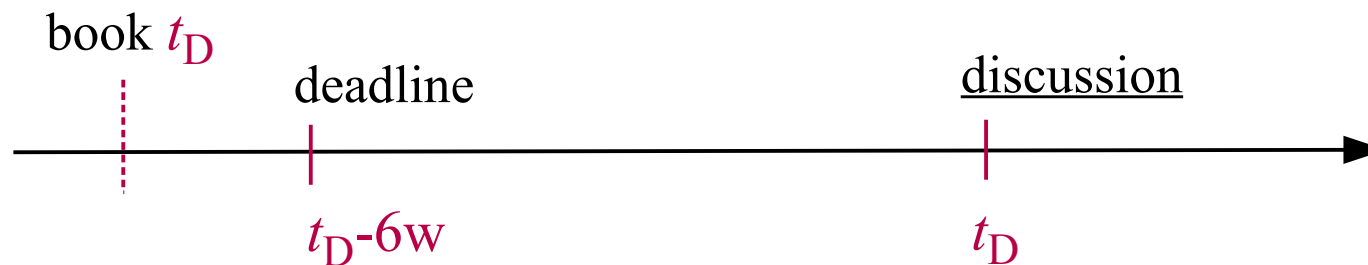
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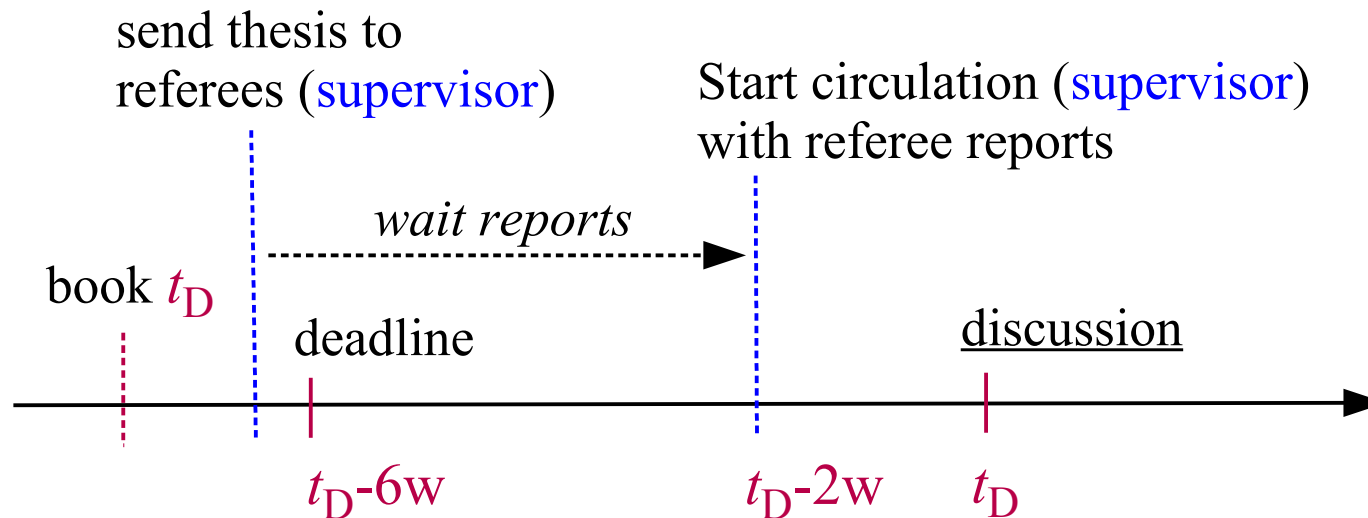
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*My recommendation: plan the writing of the Thesis in order to have it in a form ready to be sent to the referees 2 months before your tentative discussion date.*



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