

Doctoral defenses and defense formats: International study, 2020

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q1

Welcome to this questionnaire on "Doctoral defenses and defense formats"!

I am interested in understanding the relation between doctoral defense formats and student perception. For this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your experience during your doctoral defense. Your responses will be kept completely confidential. ^[11/11]_[SEP] Your personal information will not be published as part of the dataset. All entries are anonymous. E-mail addresses are only collected to send the report of this study to the participants.

You may be reminded of unpleasant events and emotions during the doctoral defense. Should you have unresolved traumatic experiences, please contact a licensed medical professional. If you feel anxious when reading any question, you have the option to not answer the question

The study should take you around 17 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You will not have to pay anything to participate and will not be paid either. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study. The Principal Investigator of this study can be contacted at Eva Lantsoght elantsoght@usfq.edu.ec. ^[11/11]_[SEP]

All participants will be informed on the outcome of the study by the end of 2021 by email, provided that you leave your contact information at the end of the questionnaire.

IRB approval has been obtained through Universidad San Francisco de Quito with study number 2019-139IN.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You are 18 years of age. You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time for any reason. You understand your participation in this study and understand the risks and benefits participating in this study.

—

- ☐ I consent, begin the study (1)
- ☐ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate (2)
-

Page Break

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Demographics



Q4

In this part of the survey, I collect general demographic data.

In which country do you currently reside?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)



Q13 What is your year of birth?

Q17 Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

☐

White (1)

☐

Black or African American (2)

☐

American Indian or Alaska Native (3)

☐

Asian (4)

☐

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)

☐

Other (6) _____

Q18 What is your gender?

☐

Male (1)

☐

Female (2)

☐

Other/Prefer not to say (3)



Q8 In which country did you defend your doctorate?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q15 In which year did you defend your doctorate?

Q16 What is your current position?

- ☐ Post-doctoral researcher (1)
 - ☐ Assistant professor (2)
 - ☐ Associate professor (3)
 - ☐ Full professor (4)
 - ☐ Other academic appointment (5)
 - ☐ Employed in industry (6)
 - ☐ Employed in government (7)
 - ☐ Business owner/Self-employed (8)
 - ☐ Unemployed (9)
 - ☐ Other (10)
-

Q65 What is the field in which you obtained your doctorate?

- ☐ Agricultural and Biological Sciences (1)
- ☐ Arts and Humanities (2)
- ☐ Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (3)
- ☐ Business, Management and Accounting (4)
- ☐ Chemical Engineering (5)
- ☐ Chemistry (6)
- ☐ Computer Science (7)
- ☐ Decision Sciences (8)
- ☐ Dentistry (9)
- ☐ Earth and Planetary Sciences (10)
- ☐ Economics, Econometrics and Finance (11)
- ☐ Energy (12)
- ☐ Engineering (13)
- ☐ Environmental Science (14)
- ☐ Health Professions (15)
- ☐ Immunology and Microbiology (16)
- ☐ Materials Science (17)
- ☐ Mathematics (18)
- ☐ Medicine (19)

- ☐ Multidisciplinary (20)
 - ☐ Neuroscience (21)
 - ☐ Nursing (22)
 - ☐ Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceuticals (23)
 - ☐ Physics and Astronomy (24)
 - ☐ Psychology (25)
 - ☐ Social Sciences (26)
 - ☐ Veterinary (27)
-

Q18 Please leave your email address here, if you want to receive a report with the outcome of this study.

Page Break

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Block 2

Q19

In this part of the survey, I collect data about your doctoral defense and defense format.

What was the outcome of your doctoral defense?

- ☐ Passed (1)
 - ☐ Minor corrections (2)
 - ☐ Major corrections (3)
 - ☐ Switched fields (4)
 - ☐ Dropped out (5)
-

Q20 Which term was used for your defense?

- ☐ Viva (1)
 - ☐ Defense (2)
 - ☐ Disputas (3)
 - ☐ Disputation (4)
 - ☐ Final presentation (5)
 - ☐ Other (6) _____
-

Q21 Did you publish a finalized thesis before or after the defense?

- ☐ Before the defense (1)
 - ☐ After the defense (2)
 - ☐ I did not finish my thesis (3)
-

Q22 In some countries, the defense takes place in more than one step. For example, you could have a closed defense followed by a public defense. Select below the answer that best describes the steps in the procedures of your defense:

- ☐ One-step defense (1)
 - ☐ Two-step defense (2)
 - ☐ More than two steps (3)
-

Q23 Did your defense take place in written or oral form?

- ☐ Written defense (1)
 - ☐ Oral defense (2)
-

Q24 Did you have a public or private defense?

- ☐ Public defense (1)
 - ☐ Private defense (2)
 - ☐ Both (two steps) (3)
-

Q25 Did your defense follow a fixed time schedule or was the timeline committee-driven?

- ☐ Fixed time schedule (1)
- ☐ Committee-driven (2)
- ☐ Other, please explain (3) _____
-

Q26 How much time did the defense take?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour (1)
- ☐ 1 hour - 1.5 hours (2)
- ☐ 1.5 hours - 2 hours (3)
- ☐ 2 hours - 3 hours (4)
- ☐ More than 3 hours (5)
-

Q28 Did you receive committee feedback before the defense?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Q28 = Yes

Q29 If so, did you include this feedback in your thesis before the defense?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Partially (2)
- ☐ No (3)
-

Q35 Did you have an idea of the recommendation (pass/minor corrections/major corrections/fail) from the committee members before the defense?

- ☐ Yes, of all committee members (1)
- ☐ Yes, of one or more committee members (2)
- ☐ No (3)
-

Q30 Did your defense include a presentation?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Q30 = Yes

Q31 Who formed the audience of this presentation?

- ☐ My guests and my committee (1)
- ☐ Only my guests (2)
- ☐ Only my committee (3)
- ☐ Other, please explain (4) _____
-

Q32 How many committee members did you have?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Number of committee members ()	
--------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Q33 Was your supervisor present during your defense?

- ☐ Yes, as part of the committee (1)
- ☐ Yes, as part of the audience (2)
- ☐ No (3)
-

Q34 My committee had the following members

- ☐ Internal to my department (1)
- ☐ Internal to my university (2)
- ☐ External to my university, from other university (3)
- ☐ External to my university, from industry (4)
- ☐ External to my university, from government (5)

Q47 Were all committee members physically present in the room or did some of them connect through video- or phone conference?

- ☐ All committee members were physically present (1)
- ☐ Some were present and some connected remotely (2)
- ☐ All committee members connected through video- or phone conference (3)

Q36 At your institution, how important is the defense as part of the PhD examination process

Mere formality Integral to examination

0

10

Importance of defense ()



Q37 Which language(s) were used during your defense?

☐

English (1)

☐

Language of country where university is located (2)

Q38 Was the language used during your defense your native language?

☐

Yes (1)

☐

No, but I'm near-native (2)

☐

No (3)

Q39 Were you and your committee members required to follow a certain dress code?

☐

Yes, academic togas (1)

☐

Yes, other formal wear (2)

☐

No (3)

Q40 Who asked questions during your defense?

- ☐ All committee members (1)
 - ☐ Some committee members (2)
 - ☐ Audience (3)
 - ☐ Other, please explain (4)
-

Q42 Did your defense focus on your research only, or did it include other elements such as defense of propositions, lecture on a different topic in your field...?

- ☐ My research only (1)
 - ☐ Other elements (2) _____
-

Q41 Did your defense include a laudatio (a congratulatory speech of the supervisor after receiving the outcome of defense)?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
-

Q46 How did you prepare for your defense? Please summarize the actions you undertook to prepare for your defense.

Q43 Did you have a mock defense or other type of rehearsal?

- ☐ Mock defense (1)
 - ☐ Other type of practice (2)
 - ☐ No practice (3)
-

Q44 Did you attend a course to prepare for your defense?

- ☐ Yes, course about the defense itself (1)
 - ☐ Yes, as part of another PhD course (2)
 - ☐ No (3)
-

Q45 Did you read a book, a chapter, websites, blog posts... about the defense as part of your preparation? If so, which?

- ☐ Yes, the following (1) _____
 - ☐ No (2)
-




Page Break

End of Block: Block 2


Start of Block: Block 3

Q48 In this part of the survey, I collect data about your experience during the doctoral defense.

On a scale from 0 – 10 how nervous were you before the defense, during the defense, and after the defense (but before receiving the outcome)?

	Not nervous at all	Extremely nervous									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Before the defense ()											
During the defense ()											
After the defense, before receiving the outcome ()											

Q49 On a scale from 0 – 10, how much did you enjoy your defense?

	Not at all	Enjoyed it very much									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How much did you enjoy your defense? ()											

Q50 Did you consider your committee fair?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ To some extent (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q51 Did you consider your committee suitable for making a well-balanced assessment of your work?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ To some extent (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q52 On a scale from 0 to 10, how important did you perceive your defense?

Only a formality Crucial to passing PhD examination

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How important did you perceive your defense?
()



Q53 On a scale from 0 – 10, how difficult did you perceive your defense?

Extremely easy Somewhat easy Neither easy nor difficult Somewhat difficult Extremely difficult

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Difficulty of defense ()




Q54 On a scale from 0 - 10 how formal was your defense?

Very informal

Following strict protocol
for procedures and
language


0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Level of formality of the defense ()	
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Q56 On a scale from 0 - 10 how serious were the defense proceedings?

Relaxed, space for humor Very serious, no space for humor

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Level of seriousness of the defense ()	
----------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Q58 In your own words, how would you describe the purpose of your defense?

Q57 How would you describe the purpose of your defense? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Examination (1)
- ☐ Ceremony (2)
- ☐ Celebration (3)
- ☐ Confirmation (4)
- ☐ Rite of passage (5)
- ☐ Other (6) _____

Q59 How did your defense influence your perception of your academic competence?

- ☐ My perception of my academic competence increased after my defense (1)
 - ☐ My perception of my academic competence decreased after my defense (2)
 - ☐ My perception of my academic competence was not influenced by my defense (3)
-

Q60 How did your defense influence your desire to continue to work in the sphere of your PhD research?

- ☐ My desire to continue to work in the sphere of my PhD research increased after my defense (1)
 - ☐ My desire to continue to work in the sphere of my PhD research decreased after my defense (2)
 - ☐ My desire to continue to work in the sphere of my PhD research was not affected by my defense (3)
-

Q61 How did your defense influence your desire to work in academia?

- ☐ My desire to work within academia increased after my defense (1)
 - ☐ My desire to work within academia decreased after my defense (2)
 - ☐ My desire to work within academia was not affected by my defense (3)
-

Q62 How did your defense influence your perception on the publishability of your research?

- ☐ My perception on the publishability of my PhD increased after my defense (1)
- ☐ My perception on the publishability of my PhD decreased after my defense (2)
- ☐ My perception on the publishability of my PhD was not affected by my defense (3)

Q63 On a scale from 0 - 10, how valuable do you consider the oral PhD defense as part of the doctoral experience?

	Not worth at all	Extremely valuable experience									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value of the defense ()											

Q64 In hindsight, would you have prepared differently for the defense? Describe what you would have done differently

End of Block: Block 3