

Dear doctoral candidates, dear thesis advisors, dear Expert Committee members

The GHS Team would like to share with you some recent updates to our procedures and website.

I. Winter closure

The GHS Office will be closed from December 19, 2025 – January 04, 2026. We wish you all happy holidays and a good start in the new year!

II. Old GHS regulations: Defenses in January and February

- For doctoral candidates enrolled at the Medical Faculty who plan to defend in January or early February, the deadline for submitting the application documents as well as the assessments from the thesis advisor and co-referee is 8-9 weeks prior to the defense date. The GHS Office will inform the candidate about the exact deadline.
- For doctoral candidates enrolled at the Faculty of Human Sciences, special deadlines and procedures apply. Please contact the GHS Office as soon as you start planning your defense

III. New GHS regulations: Information about thesis evaluation and defense

The GHS website has been updated with a new page with information about [thesis evaluation and defense procedures for students under the new regulations](#).

For an overview over the main changes from the old to the new regulations, please see [here](#).

IV. New GHS regulations: Approval of independent expert before Second-year exam and thesis and thesis evaluation and defense

For doctoral candidates under the new regulations, the participation of an [independent expert](#) as examiner is mandatory for the Second-year exam and the evaluation of the PhD thesis and defense. The GHS Office is responsible for checking if the suggested independent expert is qualified for this role. The doctoral candidate should contact the GHS Office with the name of the suggested independent expert well before the Second-year exam and defense.

Please note that if a Second-year exam is conducted without this verification and it is later found that the expert does not meet the independence criteria (see the rules [here](#)), the exam will need to be repeated. The same independent expert may also evaluate the thesis and participate in the defense. However, we kindly ask you to inform us in advance so that we can confirm that the situation has not changed and that the expert remains independent.

Kind regards
The GHS Team

University of Bern
Graduate School for Health Sciences
Phone: + 41 31 684 59 60
info.ghs@unibe.ch