

## Annex to the main statutes of the Doctoral School in Science and Engineering (DSSE):

### Excellent Thesis Award for doctoral theses

#### 1. Scope

The excellent thesis award will be given annually to around the best 10% of doctoral theses defended by doctoral candidates of the DSSE.

The main criterion for the award is the scientific and/or technological excellence and impact of the thesis. Excellence and impact are demonstrated by the novelty of the results, the advancement in knowledge achieved by the thesis and in new solutions presented in the thesis.<sup>1</sup> Generally, excellence and impact are also manifested by research specific output, such as publications in respected and relevant journals or conferences, patents, publicly available datasets or software. The impact-factor of the journal should not be a criterion.<sup>2</sup> Further criteria for the award are the quality and clarity of the presentation of the results in the thesis and in the self-assessment by the candidate (see 2(5) below).

#### 2. Nomination Procedure

- (1) Supervisors who wish to nominate a doctoral candidate for the excellent thesis award inform the president of the defence jury<sup>3</sup> and the doctoral candidate the latest 6 weeks before the defence. They will provide the jury president with a written statement at least one week before the defence, why they wish to nominate the thesis. The statement should cover the same questions as the statements by the external jury members (see 2(2)). In addition, the supervisor should comment on the independence of the nominee.
- (2) The president of the defence jury requests a written evaluation of the thesis of one to two pages from the two external defence jury members, including a clear statement if they support or not the nomination for the excellent thesis award. The statements should answer the following questions: How novel are the results presented in the thesis? How does the thesis present a major step forward in the field? How likely are the results to have a major impact on the research field? Is the dissertation particularly well and clearly written? Based on their own experience in the last years: is this thesis among the 10% best doctoral theses they have encountered? The evaluations are sent to the jury president at least one week before the defence.
- (3) The jury president informs the jury about the content of the statements by the external jury members and the supervisor.
- (4) The latest on the day of the defence, the doctoral candidate submits a self-assessment of approximately 500 words to the jury president, that provides a clear narrative on the excellence and the impact of the doctoral thesis.<sup>1</sup>
- (5) After the defence, the defence jury discusses and decides if the doctoral candidate should be nominated for the excellent thesis award. The nomination is part of the thesis defence report.

<sup>1</sup> How does this work push the borders of knowledge? Has the scientific community gained an insight that it did not have before, an answer to a question or solution to a problem, where only the question or the problem existed before? Have we learned something relevant that was not known before? Can the society solve a technical problem that it could not solve before?

<sup>2</sup> The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, <https://sfдора.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Art. 37 (6) Loi du 27 juin 2018 ayant pour objet l'organisation de l'Université du Luxembourg

- (6) Once the defence report is uploaded in ServiceNow and in those cases where the jury supports the nomination for the award, the programme administrators will ask the jury president to provide the statements by the nominee, the external jury members and the supervisor.
- (7) A file comprising the self-assessment of the nominees, the evaluations of the external jury members, and the statement by the supervisor will be sent by the programme administrator to the programme director of the nominees' doctoral programme of affiliation. These files can be sent throughout the year, the latest on 30<sup>th</sup> September of the given period. The programme director together with the programme committee evaluates the files against field specific quality criteria and creates a shortlist of their nominees, which cannot exceed 30% of the number of defences in the programme during the nomination period. Any additional criteria, beyond those in (1), are written and communicated clearly on the webpage of the programme.

### 3. Timeline

The nomination period for eligible theses ends each year on 30<sup>th</sup> September and covers the previous 12 months. Only theses defended during this period are eligible. The statements by the nominee, the external jury members and the supervisor are collected until 30<sup>th</sup> September and transmitted to the programme director. The programme director forwards the shortlisted files to the DSSE facilitator before 15<sup>th</sup> October. The award decision has to be made by November 15<sup>th</sup> of the concerned year by the excellent thesis award jury (c.f. 4.) to allow an award ceremony in the framework of the annual UL graduation ceremony.

### 4. Selection

The excellent thesis award jury consists of one academic representative from each DSSE doctoral programme, nominated by the programme director and listed on the DSSE webpage. The award jury will select the winners amongst the shortlisted nominees. The number of winners will (on average) not exceed 10% of the number of all defences per programme of the concerned award period.

The award will be given during the graduation ceremony in December. A participation of the awardees in the graduation ceremony is not mandatory to receive the excellent thesis award.

### 5. Specific procedure for the 2020 award

For the 2020 award procedure, in general, no statements by the external jury members will be available. For the 2020 award, decisions will be taken based on the self-assessment report of the doctoral candidates, the statement by the supervisor and the jury defence report. The BED will provide the programme administrators by the end of July and again by the end of August with the names and contact details of all nominees, whose thesis defence report recommends the nomination for the award (new form) or who received an excellent grade (old form). The BED will also provide those jury defence reports. The programme administrators will contact the nominees who defended before 1<sup>st</sup> September to provide their self-assessment until 30<sup>th</sup> September. Nominees, who defend after 31<sup>st</sup> August have to provide their self-assessment to the jury president at the date of the defence. Programme administrators will be informed by BED (or if possible by ServiceNow) about those defences, taking place in September 2020, where the jury recommends the nomination to the award.