



## 9th edition of the competition - 2026

### “Present your thesis in 4 minutes”

**Standing Committee Agreement CP/2026/01/05**

January 27, 2026

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The UPC's Doctoral School participates in the Present your thesis in 4 minutes competition, which is organised by the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation ([FCRI](#)) with the support of the Government of Catalonia and in which 12 Catalan universities participate.

The competition proposes that doctoral candidates in any discipline take on the challenge of explaining their research orally and individually to a lay audience in a maximum of four minutes in simple and easy-to-understand language, for a general audience that is not necessarily specialized.

The competition takes place in two stages: the first stage is a preliminary round at each university to select a winner who will represent that university in the second stage. The second stage is the inter-university final, in which one representative from each participating university competes.

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## Competition rules

The competition challenges PhD students to explain their thesis in a public presentation lasting no more than four minutes, using simple and easy-to-understand language for a general audience that is not necessarily specialized. The purpose of this initiative is to bring university research closer to society and to encourage public interest in science communication and dissemination. The competition rewards the candidate's ability to communicate their ideas clearly to a general audience in open and public sessions.

### 1. Requirements for candidates

- Candidates must be doctoral students who are enrolled at the UPC and who have paid for academic supervision in the 2025-2026 academic year.
- They must be in the second year of their doctoral degree at least (from the date of the first enrolment).
- They must not have defended their doctoral thesis before entering the competition.
- Not having been awarded the first prize of the contest in previous editions. Candidates from previous editions who meet the rest of the requirements may reapply.
- They must commit to attending both the institutional final at the UPC and the final at the FCRI.
- They must undertake not to include any confidential information related to their research in their public presentation. Neither the FCRI nor the UPC are responsible for non-compliance by participants in accordance with current confidentiality and intellectual property regulations.
- They must have the approval of the thesis supervisor or supervisors when they enter the competition.

### 2. Participation rules

The competition is held in two parts and the corresponding stages described below:

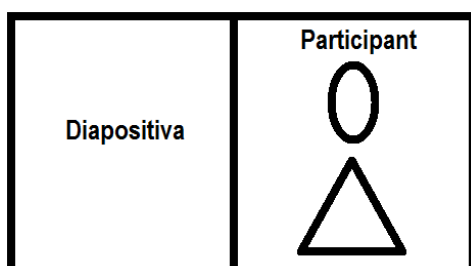
#### **FIRST PART:** Development of the competition at UPC

- **First stage:** Recording of the presentation



Candidates must record a presentation video in accordance with the following presentation rules:

- The maximum length of the video is 1 minute. Timing starts from the beginning of the recording.
- During this time, the candidate must introduce themselves, state the name of the doctoral program they belong to, briefly explain the topic of their doctoral thesis, and justify their participation in the competition.
- The candidate must appear full-length in the video for the entire presentation.
- The video must be recorded in horizontal format and in MP4 file format.
- You cannot edit the sound or video. The presentation must be recorded in one continuous take, with no cuts.
- Although it is not necessary to go into research details at this stage, a maximum of two static slides are allowed. If slides are used, the candidate must occupy at least 50% of the video frame through editing, following the format below:



- The use of videos, additional audio, musical instruments, costumes, or other similar elements is not allowed.
- Presentations must be made in Catalan, Spanish or English.
- It is recommended that participants not use notes or cue cards during the presentation.
- A brief or humorous quote is allowed, as long as it does not offend or discriminate even if it is in a humorous tone.

▪ **Second stage: Registering for the competition at the UPC**



The candidate must complete and submit the application and video through the online registration form available on the Doctoral School's website, according to the deadline set in the call calendar.

The following documents, duly signed, must be attached to the registration form:

- Authorization from the thesis supervisor to participate in the competition.
- Authorization from the candidate for the use of their image rights.

In addition, the presentation video must be included, recorded according to the rules established in the previous stage. The video must be fully accessible for viewing, without the need to request prior permissions or authorizations.

Submitting the application to the UPC implies that the candidates accept the rules of the call.

### ▪ **Third stage: Selecting participants**

Once the deadline for applications has passed, the Doctoral School will publish a provisional list of admitted and non-admitted applicants on its website. Once the period for complaints and corrections has ended, the final list of admitted and non-admitted applicants will be published, as well as the order in which the interventions will take place at the institutional final.

If the number of applications accepted for processing exceeds twelve, a pre-selection may be made to determine which candidates can advance to the institutional final and which will be excluded. This selection will be carried out by a jury of 3 to 7 members, who may be researchers, teachers, postdocs, students or former students, or administrative and service staff, all from the UPC. The jury will have a president, a secretary, and one or more members. The identities of the jury members will not be made public. The supervisors of the theses entered in the competition may not be part of the jury.

The jury's evaluation criteria in this selection phase will be communication quality, oral and body expression, and the organization of the presentation video. Each jury member will individually select the candidates they consider most suitable according to these criteria, and then discuss with the rest of the jury to reach a consensus on the final list. The maximum number of participants selected to advance to the Institutional Final will be twelve.



The Doctoral School sets the rules for creating the videos but reserves the right to assess and adjust the presentation criteria if the jury deems it necessary, without affecting the validity of the process or equality among candidates.

The jury must prepare and sign a record listing the selected and excluded candidates in alphabetical order, without ranking them or assigning scores.

The Doctoral School will publish on its website the list of candidates selected to participate in the Institutional Final, as well as those who were excluded. The announcement will also include the order of presentations for the Institutional Final.

Under no circumstances can the jury's decision regarding candidate selection be appealed or contested.

Before the Institutional Final, and according to the competition calendar, the Doctoral School will inform the candidates, either by email or through an online session, about all the necessary details regarding the organization of the event and their participation in the final.

#### ▪ **Fourth stage: UPC institutional final**

It is foreseen that the institutional final of the competition at the UPC that the candidates will participate in an in-person session, which will take place on the date established in the call's calendar, in an open, public session before the jury, and which may coincide with the annual Open Day of the Doctoral School.

The event will be presented and conducted by the management of the Doctoral School. The order of intervention of the candidates is the one that will have been published in the resolution of candidates admitted to the institutional final. For organizational needs of the event, the Doctoral School reserves the right to modify the order of participation of the participants, with prior notice to the affected individuals.

Candidates who are not present at the time they are due to intervene will be disqualified from the competition, which will continue as planned.

When it is their turn to speak, candidates must present and explain the topic of their research and, in addition, the results and possible applications of their thesis, according to the following rules for the presentations:

- Participants have a maximum of 4 minutes for their presentation. Anyone exceeding this limit will be automatically disqualified.





- A presentation is considered to have started when the participant begins speaking.
- Only a **maximum of two static slides can be projected.**
- **Incorporating videos, sound, musical instruments, costumes, etc., is not allowed.**
- If any material is used for support, it is recommended to keep it to a minimum.
- Presentations are only accepted in Catalan, Spanish, or English.
- It is recommended not to bring notes or written prompts.
- A brief or humorous citation is allowed, as long as it does not offend or discriminate, even in a humorous tone.

The jury will consist of between 3 and 7 members, who may be researchers, teachers, postdocs, students, former students, or administrative staff, all of them from the UPC. There will be a president, a secretary, and members, and the composition will be announced at the beginning of the event. Directors, co-directors, or tutors of the theses participating in the institutional final cannot be part of the jury.

The Jury will individually evaluate from 1 (*minimum score*) to 5 (*maximum score*) according to the following two criteria:

• **Criterion I: Understanding and content** (constitutes 70% of the total score).

- The presentation has provided an understanding of the background of the research question addressed and its significance.
- The presentation has clearly described the key findings of the research, including conclusions and results.
- The presentation has followed a clear and logical sequence.
- The thesis topic, key findings, and significance as well as research results have been communicated effectively to a non-specialized audience.
- The participant has avoided scientific jargon, explained terminology, and provided adequate background information to illustrate main points.
- The participant has allocated appropriate time to each element of their presentation, without any specific aspect being addressed for too long.
- The presentation has not been too rushed.



• **Criterion II: Commitment and communication** (constitutes 30% of the total score).

- The participant has not trivialized or overly generalized their research.
- The participant has conveyed enthusiasm for their research.
- The participant captures and maintains the audience's attention.
- The participant has had sufficient stage presence, eye contact, and vocal range; maintained a steady pace, and displayed confidence.
- The supporting slide improved the presentation: it was clear, readable, and concise.

Once the round of interventions has concluded, the jury will have a maximum of 30 minutes to deliver its assessment.

The jury's decision will be final and will be announced at the same event before the attending audience, with the names of the 3rd, 2nd, and 1st-place finalists. The 1st-place finalist will be the winner of the UPC institutional final and will receive €300. The 2nd-place finalist will receive €250, and the 3rd-place finalist will receive €200. Both the prize winners and the remaining finalists will receive a certificate on site.

Following the institutional final, on the date established in the call schedule, the Doctoral School will communicate to the FCRi the name and the contact email address of the candidate who will represent the UPC at the interuniversity final of the FCRi's [Present your thesis in 4minutes competition](#)

## **SECOND PART: Interuniversity final**

The interuniversity final is organised by the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation ([FCRi](#)) and held in a single, open and public session and broadcast on the FCRi YouTube channel on June 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., at the Auditorium of the Pilarín Bayés Library in Vic (Passeig de la Generalitat, 1, 08500 Vic).

The participants in this session will be the 12 candidates selected as finalists in the first part of the competition (one from each Catalan university). The order of intervention will be random according to a prior draw conducted by FCRi and communicated to the finalists.



The FCRi will determine the composition of the jury, which will be made up of a minimum of five members from the fields of science and communication, and which will assess the presentations given by the twelve finalists.

*Presentations rules:*

- As in the fourth stage of the first part of the competition, participants will have a maximum of four minutes to present their research.
- Only a maximum of two static slides can be projected.
- No video or sound, no musical instruments, no costumes, etc. are allowed.
- Participants may use some material, but it is recommended that this be kept to a minimum.
- Presentations must be in Catalan, Spanish or English.
- Timing of presentations will begin when participants start speaking.
- It is recommended that participants not use notes or cue cards.
- Participants may use a brief or humorous quotation.

The Jury will evaluate individually according to the same criteria defined in Stage 4 of Phase 1:

- Criterion I: Understanding and content (accounts for 70% of the total score)
- Criterion II: Engagement and communication (accounts for 30% of the total score)

The prizes and the amounts will be as follows:

- 1st Prize (Jury): **€2,500**
- 2nd Prize (Jury): **€1,500**
- 3rd Prize (Jury): **€1,000**
- Audience Award: **€1,000**
- Assumpció Català i Poch Special Mention for the promotion and encouragement of the Catalan language: 1.000 € (Catalan Language Strengthening Plan). Only presentations delivered entirely in the Catalan language will be eligible.

The indicated amounts will be subject to the corresponding personal income tax (IRPF) withholding in accordance with the applicable legal regulations. In the event of a tie between the first and second prizes, or between the second and third prizes, the jury will deliberate and decide, as quickly as possible and by simple majority, who the winner is.





### 3. Competition calendar

	Date
Publication of the UPC call and rules	<b>02/02/2026</b>
Formalization of Candidate Registration	<b>From 2/02/2026 to 01/03/2026</b>
Review of the applications	<b>From 2 to 06/03/2026</b>
Provisional publication of the decision on admitted and excluded candidates	<b>09/03/2026</b>
Final publication of the decision on candidates admitted and excluded from participating in the UPC institutional final	<b>23/03/2026</b>
Dispatch by the Doctoral School of an informational email with information and recommendations for participants qualified for the Institutional Final	<b>17/04/2026</b>
Institutional Final – UPC, Vèrtex Building Auditorium (North Campus)	<b>14/05/2026</b>
Communication to the FCRi of the winner and UPC candidate for the interuniversity final	<b>15/05/2026</b>
Interuniversity Final (Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation) at 5:00 PM at the Pilarín Bayés Library Auditorium in Vic (Passeig de la Generalitat, 1, 08500 Vic).	<b>11/06/2026</b>

### 4. Legal regulations

#### 4.1 Applicable regulations

The rules set out in this call for entries will be published on the Doctoral School website and will be the only instrument of official advertising for the purpose of determining deadlines and compliance with the formalities specified herein. Nevertheless, in a supplementary and non-official manner, the UPC may also send e-mail notices to the interested parties and use any other means of publication it deems appropriate to ensure that the event is disseminated as effectively as possible among doctoral students and researchers. The organisers must communicate with participants using the e-mail address they provide when they register. Winning the first stage of the competition implies participating in the second stage.



## 4.2 Regulations on the use of images in presentations

If a slide is ultimately used in the presentation and it features recognizable individuals, the candidate must have their written authorization to use and distribute their image. In the case of minors, the candidate must ensure that written consent has been obtained from the parents or legal guardians to use and distribute the image.

The organization reserves the right to request authorization for the use of images, which the participant must provide if their presentation is selected. In this regard, UPC will not assume any claims from third parties related to the submitted works. The participant will be fully responsible for the video they submit to participate in the competition and must guarantee that the works are their own or that they hold the necessary rights to use them in this contest. The organization reserves the right to exclude from the competition any videos that do not meet the required specifications, or that may be offensive in content or for any other reason, or if the organization considers that they could cause any type of harm.

## 4.3 Dissemination

By participating in the competition, candidates authorize UPC to use, exploit, and distribute the recording of their presentation during the UPC Institutional Final without any temporal or territorial limitation, for promotional and advertising activities, as well as in all initiatives launched by the Doctoral School to promote scientific culture and research, and to encourage doctoral studies at UPC. If UPC wishes to use the recording outside of this scope, it must expressly request authorization. UPC reserves the right to publicly disclose the names of the winners, as well as to use their image in all activities related to the prize and/or for promotional or advertising purposes of the competition, without the winners being entitled to any form of compensation. The processing of personal data will be carried out in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations.

## 4.4 Acceptance of the rules of the rules and exemption from liability

All participants must fully accept the competition rules, as well as the organization's decisions regarding any unforeseen incidents not covered in these rules, according to the criteria deemed most appropriate by the organization. The organization reserves the right to extend or modify these rules, and even to cancel or suspend the competition if there is a justified reason. Any modifications to the rules will take effect from the day after their publication. The organization will be exempt from any obligation or compensation to participants if, due to force majeure, legal requirements, or other organizational criteria, the competition must be cancelled or suspended.



Participants will have a period of three days to withdraw from the contest for this reason or take any appropriate actions regarding the extensions or modifications that have been made. The organization will not be responsible for possible errors during the video upload process in the registration form, nor for technical issues that prevent its proper submission. The organization reserves the right to disqualify and exclude from the competition any participant who commits fraud, disrupts the proper functioning or normal course of the contest, or includes offensive or violent comments that violate dignity or decorum, or that may cause offense. At the organization's discretion, any submission that does not strictly comply with all formal or content requirements established in these rules may be accepted or excluded, as well as the possibility of requesting the correction of formal defects or admitting exceptionally accept the submission if it is considered that the error does not substantially affect the competition criteria or the equality among participants. Decisions made by the organization regarding the admission, evaluation, and selection of submissions, including their possible inclusion in the final phase of the competition, will be final and not subject to appeal.

#### 4.5 Personal data protection

In accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation, Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Organic Law 3/2018, of 5 December, on the protection of personal data and the guarantee of digital rights, the basic information on personal data protection in the processing that must be done in this competition is as follows.

Information on data protection	
<b>Data controller</b>	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya UPC Doctoral School <a href="mailto:escola.doctorat@upc.edu">escola.doctorat@upc.edu</a>
<b>Contact details of the data protection officer</b>	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya Carrer Jordi Girona, 31 08034 Barcelona SPAIN
<b>Purposes of the processing</b>	Specifically, those described in these rules for the 9th edition of the competition Present your thesis in 4 minutes, 2026.  Generally, as described in processing F03.19: Management of awards, competitions, donations, or similar events organized by the University. More information here <a href="https://rat.upc.edu/ca/registre-de-tractaments-de-dades-personals/F03.19">https://rat.upc.edu/ca/registre-de-tractaments-de-dades-personals/F03.19</a>
<b>Legitimate interests</b>	The processing of personal data is based on the consent of the data subject, which is given by ticking the corresponding box on the form



	that must be completed to participate in the “Present Your Thesis in 4 Minutes” competition
<b>Recipients</b>	<p>The personal data of participants may be disclosed to the following recipients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general public, through access to UPC’s print or electronic media, including the Internet, for educational, research, or competition promotion purposes.</li> <li>• The Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation (FCRi), the organizing entity of the competition, in which the twelve Catalan public universities participate.</li> <li>• Publication on the Doctoral School’s website, on UPC institutional websites, and on social media of the names of the competition winners, as well as, where applicable, their image and voice, in accordance with the provisions of these rules.</li> </ul> <p>Since some of the social media platforms used may be located outside the European Economic Area, where legislation may not guarantee a level of personal data protection equivalent to that of the EU, participants expressly consent to the processing of their personal data in accordance with the provisions of this call, as well as to any possible international data transfers that may result.</p>
<b>Rights of data subjects</b>	<p>Interested parties may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, and restriction of processing, as well as the right to object and the right to data portability.</p> <p>More information: <a href="https://www.upc.edu/normatives/ca/proteccio-de-dades/normativa-europea-de-proteccio-de-dades/drets">https://www.upc.edu/normatives/ca/proteccio-de-dades/normativa-europea-de-proteccio-de-dades/drets</a></p>
<b>Retention period</b>	<p>The data will be retained for as long as necessary for the purposes described and in accordance with UPC’s personal data retention policy.</p> <p><a href="https://www.upc.edu/normatives/ca/proteccio-de-dades/normativa-europea-de-proteccio-de-dades/politica-de-conservacio-de-les-dades-de-caracter-personal">https://www.upc.edu/normatives/ca/proteccio-de-dades/normativa-europea-de-proteccio-de-dades/politica-de-conservacio-de-les-dades-de-caracter-personal</a></p>
<b>Complaint</b>	<p>If you have been unable to exercise your rights to your satisfaction, you can file a complaint with the APDCAT: <a href="http://apdcatt.gencat.cat">apdcatt.gencat.cat</a></p>

**Standing Committee CP/2026/01/04**  
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