"Thesis in 4 Minutes" competition
Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation (FCRi)

Tell us about your research in four minutes!

The UPC Doctoral School is participating in the "Thesis in 4 Minutes" competition organised by the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation (FCRi) with the support of the Government of Catalonia. Catalonia’s 12 universities are taking part.

The competition challenges doctoral students in any scientific discipline to explain their research to a non-specialist audience in four minutes or less.

competition rules

1. Requirements for candidates
2. Rules for participation
3. Competition calendar
4. Legal regulations
   4.1 General regulations
   4.2 Rules regarding presentation of works
   4.3 Dissemination and intellectual and industrial property rights
   4.4 Implicit acceptance of competition rules and exemption from liability
   4.5 Protection of personal data

Competition rules

The competition challenges doctoral students to explain their thesis to an audience who are not necessarily specialised in the topic, in a public presentation lasting no more than four minutes. The aim is to make university research more accessible to society and get doctoral students more interested in the communication and dissemination of science. The competition rewards candidates who are able to effectively communicate their ideas to a non-specialist audience in an open, public session.

1. Requirements for candidates

   - Candidates must be UPC doctoral students who are enrolled for academic supervision in the academic year 2019/20.
   - They must be in at least their second year of doctoral studies (counted from the date of first enrolment).
   - They must not have defended their doctoral thesis at the time that they apply to participate in the competition.
They must undertake to attend both the UPC final and the final stage of the competition held at the FCRi. Candidates may not take part in the final remotely using videoconferencing or similar systems.

They must undertake not to include any confidential data or information related to their research in their public presentation. Neither the FCRi nor the UPC shall be responsible for any offences resulting from failure to comply with this obligation.

Candidates must have the approval of their thesis supervisor to submit an application.

2. Rules for participation

The competition comprises the following stages:

- **1st stage: Recording and posting of videos**
  - Candidates must record a video in which they explain the topic of their thesis and its results and possible applications, and publish the video on YouTube so that it is publicly available.
  - Candidates must take an educational approach in their use of language and ensure that their presentation is understandable to a non-specialist audience.
  - Videos may be no longer than four minutes (counted from the first second that the video starts to run). Any candidate who posts a video that is longer than four minutes will automatically be eliminated from the competition.
  - Presentations must be in Catalan, Spanish or English.
  - Static slides may be used, though it is recommended that no more than two be shown. It is recommended that participants not use notes or cue cards.
  - The use of a brief or amusing quotation is permitted.
  - Candidates may not use video footage, added sound, musical instruments, costumes, etc.
Candidates may apply by completing the online registration form on the website of the Doctoral School by the deadline indicated in the competition calendar. They must attach the thesis supervisor’s form authorising the candidate to take part in the competition and the authorisation for the transfer of image rights.

Submitting an application implies the candidate’s acceptance of the competition rules.

- **3rd stage: Selection of participants**

Once the deadline for submitting applications has passed, the Doctoral School will review the applications received and publish a provisional list of admitted and non-admitted applicants on its website. Once the period for complaints and corrections has ended, the definitive list of admitted and non-admitted applicants will be published.

Based on the assessment of a jury, the Council of Doctoral Students will select a minimum of three and a maximum of 10 candidates, who will participate in the institutional final at the UPC. The jury will be composed of three to seven members, who may be UPC researchers, teachers, postdocs, students, alumni or administrative or service staff. The jury will have a chair, a secretary and regular members.

The identity of the members of the jury will not be made public. The directors and directors of the theses entered in the competition may not be part of the jury.

The assessment criteria of the jury are the same ones that are described for the UPC institutional final (phase 4a).

The jury must prepare an act with the alphabetical list of candidates selected to participate in the institutional final. The jury will not make a classification of the candidates by punctuation at any time.

If a large number of applications are received, the Council of Doctoral Students may appoint more than one jury. In this case, the chair of each jury must send the results of their assessment to the chair of the Council of Doctoral Students in order that it may draft a decision based on these reports.

The Doctoral School will publish a list of the candidates selected to participate in the UPC final of the competition on the website of the Doctoral School by the date indicated in the competition calendar. Interested parties may submit complaints or corrections within the period stipulated in the decision. The decision will also specify the order in which presentations will take place.
4th stage: UPC final

Candidates must be physically present to participate in the UPC final, which will take place on the date indicated in the competition calendar. The final will be an open session held before the jury.

The order of presentations will be that indicated in the decision on candidates admitted to the UPC final. The Doctoral School reserves the right to make changes to the planned order of presentations for organisational reasons. If such changes are necessary, advance notice must be given, and the consent of those affected must be obtained.

Any candidate who is not present in the room when his/her presentation is scheduled to start will be disqualified and will not be entitled to contest this decision.

Rules for presentations

- Participants will have a maximum of four minutes to give their presentations, counted from the moment they begin speaking. Any candidate who goes over this limit will automatically be eliminated.
- It is recommended that no more than two static slides be used.
- Candidates are advised not use to video footage, added sound, musical instruments, costumes, etc.
- Participants may use some material, but it is recommended that this be kept to a minimum.
- Presentations must be in Catalan, Spanish or English.
- It is recommended that participants not use notes or cue cards.
- Candidates may use a brief or amusing quotation.

The jury will be composed of three to seven members, who may be UPC researchers, teachers, postdocs, students, alumni or administrative or service staff. The jury will have a chair, a secretary and regular members and its composition will be communicated at the start of the final. The supervisors of theses that are participating in the institutional final may not be members of the jury.

The jury will apply the following assessment criteria:

- Regarding presentation content
  - Clear presentation of the problem, objectives, methodology, results and possible applications
  - Understandable language
  - Structure and order of the presentation
  - Use of rhetorical devices

- Regarding the form of presentations
• Dynamic and varied intonation
• Moderate rate of speech and understandable pronunciation
• Body language
• Eye contact
• Empathy with the audience

**Regarding support material and context**
• Use of support material suited to the content
• Precise control of time
• Mastery of movements on stage

Once the presentations have ended, the jury will have a maximum of 20 minutes to issue and announce to the public the decision on the candidates in third, second and first place.

The candidate in first place will be the winner of the institutional final at the UPC and will receive a prize valued at 250€. Candidates in second and third place will receive a gift.

After the UPC final, on the date indicated in the competition calendar, the FCRi will be given the name of the candidate who will represent the UPC in the interuniversity final of the [FCRi “Thesis in 4 Minutes” competition](#).

### 5th stage: Interuniversity final

The final—a single, open, public session—will be held in Barcelona in June (in the afternoon, date and time to be published at a later date).

The seating capacity of the venue will be around 200, and it is anticipated that the event will be attended by students at different levels—bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral, upper secondary, training cycles—as well as members of the general public.

The participants in this session will be the 12 candidates selected as finalists in the first stage of the competition (one from each Catalan university). Presentations will take place in alphabetical order.

The FCRi will appoint a jury.

**Rules for presentations**

- 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.
- Candidates may use a brief or amusing quotation.

The following prizes will be awarded:

- First prize: €3,000
- Second prize: €2,000
- Audience prize: €1,000

3. Competition calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publication of the call for entries and competition rules</td>
<td>3 February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>From 3 to 29 February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of the candidates</td>
<td>From 2 to 6 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of the provisional decision and list of admitted candidates</td>
<td>09 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of the final decision and list of admitted candidates</td>
<td>13 March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of the jury on the candidates</td>
<td>From 16 to 20 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of the provisional decision on candidates selected to participate in the institutional final</td>
<td>25 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of the final decision on candidates chosen to participate in the institutional final</td>
<td>30 March 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC final</td>
<td>14 May 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication to the FCRi of the winner and UPC candidate for the interuniversity final</td>
<td>15 May 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interuniversity final</td>
<td>June 2020 (date to be determined)</td>
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4. Legal regulations

4.1 General regulations

The rules set out in this call for entries will be published on the website of the Doctoral School 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.

All participants must accept the competition rules in their entirety and any decisions taken by the organisers concerning incidents not covered by these competition rules (based on whatever considerations they deem appropriate).

4.2 Rules regarding presentation of works

Any participants who use slides in which identifiable individuals appear must have the subjects’ written authorisation to disseminate these images. In the case of minors, candidates must confirm that they have obtained the written consent of the minors’ parents or guardians to use and disseminate images in which they appear. The organisers reserve the right to request a consent form authorising the use of such images, which participants must provide if their presentation is selected. The UPC shall not be liable for any third-party claims in relation to the works presented. Participants must take full responsibility for the videos they submit for the competition. They must also confirm the works are theirs and that they have the rights required to use them in the competition. The organisers reserve the right to reject any videos that do not comply with the required characteristics, that may cause offence due to their content or for any other reason, or that they believe may cause any kind of detrimental effect.

4.3 Dissemination and intellectual and industrial property rights

Participants must authorise the UPC to use, exploit and disseminate their work, without any temporal or geographical limitations, in promotional and advertising activities, and in the context of any initiatives undertaken by the Doctoral School to promote scientific culture and research and doctoral studies at the UPC. If the organisers wish to make use of the works submitted in other contexts, they must request the authorisation of the authors concerned. The organisers reserve the right to publicly communicate the names of winners and use images of them in activities related to the prizes and/or to promote or advertise the competition. Winners shall not be entitled to receive any consideration in exchange for such use of their names or images.

4.4 Implicit acceptance of competition rules and exemption from liability

Participation in the competition implies acceptance of all of the rules for the event. The organisers reserve the right to add to or amend these rules, and to cancel or void the competition provided there is a justified reason for doing so. Any amendments to these rules will take effect the day after they are published. The organisers shall be exempt from any obligation or requirement
to pay compensation if—due to force majeure, legal requirements, or for any other reason (at the organisers’ discretion)—the competition must be cancelled or suspended. Participants will have three days to withdraw from the competition for this reason or to take any actions they deem appropriate in the event that additions or amendments are made to the rules. The organisers shall not be responsible for any internet errors or malfunctioning of the server where YouTube videos are stored. The organisers reserve the right to disqualify or exclude any participant who commits fraud, disrupts the smooth functioning and normal course of the competition in accordance with the established rules, or makes offensive or violent remarks that infringe upon the dignity or propriety of others or that may cause offence.

4.5 Protection of personal data

Personal data provided by participants will be included in a filing system under the responsibility of the University and used only for purposes related to activities within the framework of the Doctoral School competition. Persons falling within the scope of application of Organic Law 15/1999, of 13 December, on the Protection of Personal Data, may at any time exercise their right to access or rectify their data, require that it be erased, or object to its processing by contacting the Doctoral School.