

Guidelines for partial digital execution of the public thesis defence at UiS

The guidelines are set by the Pro-Rector for Research on 29 June 2020. They are effective as of 10 August 2020 and are assessed on an ongoing basis taking into account national guidelines.

Background:

The purpose of the disputation is to make available, present and defend the thesis publicly. The provisions provided in the guidelines shall ensure that the disputation can continue to be considered public even in cases when the physical presence of certain parties is not possible.

The faculty, represented by the dean, will decide after an overall assessment whether the trial lecture and disputation is to be carried out or postponed.

The instructions issued by UiS shall be followed.

Guidance:

- The faculty organises the physical participation of necessary administrative and technical staff.
- Physical attendance at the public defence venue at any given time shall follow the authorities' current decisions and rules pertaining to infection control.
- An effort shall be made to ensure that the PhD candidate, chair of the disputation and UiS administrator of the assessment committee (academic coordinator of the committee) are present in the same venue, and that the authorities' guidelines for events, taking into account the number of listeners and the organisation of these etc., are followed.
- The dispute must be streamed regardless of whether the public can access the venue. This will ensure that all interested parties can follow the trial lecture/disputation regardless of room capacity.
- The venue must have technical equipment for live-streaming, i.e. two-way audio and video transmission. The faculties at UiS should be provided with public defence facilities that meet requirements in terms of equipment and that meet the authorities' requirements pertaining to infection control. The faculties coordinate disputation dates and venues among themselves.
- The Faculty shall preferably appoint one sitting member to the assessment committee (on the occasion of the trial lecture and disputation) as a "backup solution" in the event the committee's administrator (3rd opponent) cannot be present or must act as one of the opponents. When appointing the sitting member, the rules governing disqualification shall be followed (Forvaltningsloven §6).
- The head of the entity sends the name of the proposed sitting member to the faculty's pro-dean for research. This should normally be done no later than two weeks before the public defence.
- Digital presentations must be able to be shared with all participants irrespective of whether they participate digitally or physically.
- The University Library posts the thesis in electronic form at UiS Scholarly Publishing Services <http://ebooks.uis.no/index.php/USPS/catalog/series/phd-preprint> in compliance with requirements in Section 7-11 of the PhD regulations. The thesis will thereby be made publicly available. This must occur no later than two weeks before the disputation. The deadline is absolute and cannot be waived.
- However, if the above is infeasible, the defence must be able to be conducted **wholly digitally**, i.e. all actors participate via the chosen technical system and no one is physically present in the venue at UiS. In this case, *the Guidelines for digital disputation at UiS apply when anti-coronavirus measures prevent physical participation.*

Digital platforms/IT assistance:

- The technical conference solution at UiS for digital disputation at UiS is Zoom.
- As part of the disputation service, IT assists with the zoom meeting setup. IT assistance is primarily ordered via the Service Portal: https://uis.service-now.com/tp?id=tp_catalog_item&sys_id=cc1a2fd8dbe4c7006ab3f7adae96191e. Otherwise, an inquiry can be sent to IT-hjelp@uis.no.
- Dedicated IT personnel will be present in the venue on the morning of the day the defence is to be conducted and will ensure that everything is ready for the start of the trial lecture as usual.

- It is important that the Zoom meeting is correctly configured ahead of time and that it has been thoroughly tested in advance. IT will help with this and can provide “remote support” if needed.
- A dedicated IT phone number has been set up for the disputation in question; the number is Tel: **51 83 30 00#8**. By selecting option 8, one can by-pass the normal queue and be put in direct contact with the AV technician on duty.

Duty of information:

- IT at UiS shall be notified of the time and place where the disputation will be conducted no later than ten days prior. The operations department will be involved if necessary.

Public disputation requirements:

- In the event of a restriction on physical presence, public requirements may be satisfied by allowing the public to follow the defence via the chosen technical system.
- In addition, provisions must be made to allow members of the audience to ask ex auditorio questions directly via conference equipment or via email, chat or another suitable system and then to have the questions communicated to the candidate by the disputation chair.

Announcements of disputations that are broadcast via streaming without an ordinary open auditorium must contain information that:

- Due to national and local restrictions, limits have been imposed on physical participation during the disputation.
- The defence can be followed via the chosen technical solution.
- The link allowing the public to follow the disputation digitally shall be made accessible on the university's website and in the announcement document that is distributed by e-mail.
- Normally, a specific number of the thesis are printed. Each faculty must assess for itself which number is sufficient depending on the number of physical participants on the disputation. Regardless of whether a printed copy of the thesis can be made available at the university two weeks before the disputation (cf. PhD Regulations section 7-11), a link to the electronic version of the thesis must be posted on the university's website. Likewise, the public announcement must contain the link to the website where the thesis can be accessed.

The public defence must be cancelled if one of the following occurs:

- Neither UiS's internal member of the committee nor the sitting member can be present in the approved venue or via the chosen technical system.
- If one of the external committee members cannot participate in the disputation and the sitting member cannot take over the role of third opponent (UiS's internal member/ UiS administrator).

Additional procedures for the PhD examination (trial lecture + disputation):

<i>Before the PhD examination</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PhD coordinator (admin.) and, when applicable, the Pro-Dean for research will review the procedure with the chair of the disputation and UiS's internal member on the committee (UiS-admin.) before each public defence. 	Pro-Dean/ PhD coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis will be made available at <i>UiS Scholarly Publishing Services</i> no later than two weeks before the disputation. The deadline is absolute and cannot be waived. 	Univ. Library + PhD coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the disputation hall for 2 external opponents and the doctoral candidate, for use of the chosen technical system. 	PhD coordinator + IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opponents submit questions in advance to the UiS administrator (preferably 2 days before the disputation). 	PhD coordinator

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PhD candidate submits a presentation of the trial lecture and a presentation of the thesis to the opponents no later than the day of the disputation. 	PhD coordinator
<i>Same day as the PhD examination; trial lecture</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UiS and the opponents test the IT equipment well before the trial lecture starts. The chair of the disputation committee or internal member of the committee (UiS admin.) confirms that the person presenting himself/herself to give the trial lecture is the correct candidate. The chair of the disputation announces that questions are not permitted after the trial lecture. The candidate gives the trial lecture. The presentation must be streamed so that it is available to the committee and to those members of the public audience who are not physically present. The assessment committee must consider and come to a consensus on whether the trial lecture is approved or not approved. 	PhD coordinator + IT Chair of the Disputation Chair of the Disputation Candidate + IT Committee + UiS admin.
<i>During the PhD examination; disputation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT equipment used at UiS and by opponents who are not physically present must be tested well before the actual defence begins. The chair of the disputation or internal member of the committee (UiS admin.) confirms that the person presenting himself/herself for the disputation is the correct candidate. The chair of the disputation announces the procedure for asking questions ex auditorio (for example, sending questions in by e-mail). The candidate presents the thesis. The presentation must be streamed so that it is available to the committee and to those members of the public audience who are not physically present. Opponent 1 conducts his/her opposition, which is streamed via the chosen digital system, right after the candidate has presented the thesis. Optional break. Opponent 2 then conducts his/her opposition in a like manner. The committee's administrator (UiS administrator) acts as 3rd opponent if is urgently necessary. Continually verify that all parties involved hear everything. After the appointed opposition is over, opposition ex auditorio shall be enabled. The disputation chair administers this. 	PhD coordinator +IT Chair of the Disputation Chair of the Disputation Candidate + IT Opponents IT Chair of the Disputation
<i>After the PhD examination</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic signing of the assessment committee's final report 	PhD coordinator

In addition, the [Procedure for conducting PhD disputations at the University of Stavanger](#) applies to the extent that it is practically possible and compatible with *Guidelines for conducting partial digital disputations at UiS*.

The premises of the guidelines can also be applied when conducting mid-term evaluation/50-per-cent seminar.