

Procedure for the reading and defence of doctoral theses by videoconference

Agreement of the Management Committee of the Doctoral School of the University of Girona, of 4 April 2024

Preamble

In the last modification of the academic regulations for doctoral studies at the University of Girona approved by the Governing Council in session 3/2017, of 31 March, and modified by the Governing Council in sessions 5/2017, of 29 June, 8/2018, of 30 November, 11/2019, of 16 December, 5/2021, of 29 June and 6/2024, of 24 July, the possibility of defending the doctoral thesis by videoconference is established. The Doctoral School is also empowered to establish the procedure to be followed in a videoconference defence.

This document establishes the procedure and guidelines to be followed by the members of the Doctorate panel and the candidates in the procedures for the reading and defence of doctoral theses by electronic means.

The guidelines established in this document guarantee the right of the people participating in the panel to communicate with the University by electronic means, in line with article 14 of Law 39/2015, of 1 October, on the common administrative procedure of public administrations. They ensure compliance with the security standards required of public bodies in their actions following the provisions of Royal Decree 311/2022, of 3 May 2022, which regulates the National Security Scheme for electronic administration. They incorporate the requirements established in the regulations of the legal regime of the public sector and administrative procedure for administrative acts, which must be produced in writing through electronic means.

It is understood that the defence is by videoconference when the members participate online.

In view of the arguments adduced so far, and by virtue of the powers attributed by the regulations of the Doctoral School, approved by the Governing Council in session 31/3/2011 and modified in sessions 29/5/2014, 14/05/2018 and 04/04/2024 by the Management Committee of the Doctoral School. This procedure is modified as follows.

Article 1. Requirements for the act of reading and defence by videoconference

The requirements established for the reading and defence of the doctoral thesis by videoconference are the following:

1. **Public session.** It is necessary to guarantee the character of a public session for the act of evaluation and defence. For this reason, the reading of the thesis will be published on the website of the Doctoral School. The doctoral student and the thesis supervisors must provide the link to the videoconference to anyone who requests it. The link can be requested up to three days before the day of the defence and will be deleted the day after the defence.

2. Accreditation of the doctoral student's identity. To guarantee the accreditation of the doctoral student's identity, prior to the start of the event, he / she will be asked to show his/her national identity document (DNI), NIF/NIE or passport. The secretary of the panel will note this in the minutes through a certificate provided by the Doctoral School.

3. Interaction between the doctoral student and the panel. To ensure interaction between the participants during the defence, the video conferencing must allow for:

- a. The synchronous presentation and defence of the research work before the members of the panel.
- b. The formulation of questions that are considered opportune by the panel to be answered, at the time and in the manner indicated by the president of the panel. Likewise, any doctor attending by videoconference may be allowed to formulate their questions, at the time and in the manner indicated by the president of the panel.
- c. Information from the panel to the student on the final grade awarded for the thesis.

In order to meet these requirements, a video conference platform will be used that complies with the security measures set by the National Security Scheme (ENS), such as MS Teams or Google Meet. In the event that the organizer of the session is a member of the UdG community, MS Teams will preferably be used.

Article 2. Defence application

In order to defend the thesis by videoconference, the doctoral student must present a digitally signed application to the director of the Doctoral School either by means of a certificate (model document in Annex 1, sent to comissio.doctorat@udg.edu) or through an electronic form that the Doctoral School can make available for this procedure. Exceptionally, in the event that neither of the two alternatives is possible, it will be acceptable to sign manually and send the scanned application. The request, in all cases, must be accompanied by the approval of the defence by video conference of the members of the panel, the thesis supervisors and the thesis tutor. The request must be approved by the president of the Academic Committee of the doctoral program (model document in Annex 2).

Article 3. Defence management

Once the secretary of the panel has received the application from the Doctoral School, he / she will communicate by e-mail (to comissio.doctorat@udg.edu), the address to which the panel, the doctoral student and all those people who want to follow the defence session must connect. He / she will also need to confirm the date and time of the thesis defence. This date must coincide with the one the president of the panel confirms to the Doctoral School at the time convened by the panel after having considered the need for 15 working days' notice of the date set for the defence and where he / she will have specified that this defence will be by video conference. He / she will also need to create a second videoconference session to which the members of the court will connect to deliberate in case any member of the panel connects by videoconference. Once created, he / she will communicate the address of the videoconference session for deliberation by the other members of the panel.

The person responsible for managing applications from the UdG Doctoral School must proceed as follows:

1. Send the designated panel members who are to evaluate the doctoral thesis an email with:
 - a. Information on the regulations and procedures established by the Doctoral School.
 - b. The link to the video conferencing sessions previously created by the secretary of the panel, and a reminder of the date and time of the conference.
 - c. The document for the processing of personal data that must be read by the president of the panel so that the student and the members of the panel give their consent and the defence can be carried out by videoconference.
 - d. The report to be issued by each member of the panel.
 - e. Information of the system to follow to be able to vote for "cum laude".
 - f. The secretary will also be sent the minutes for the session and the document for accrediting the identity of the doctoral student.
 - g. Reports from external reviewers and the doctoral student's and supervisor's response.
2. Send an email to the student who will defend their doctoral dissertation by videoconference with:
 - a. The URL to access the video conferencing session and the time of the session.
 - b. The document for the processing of personal data.
 - c. The necessary indications to carry out the defence. For example, identification check of the student at the beginning of the session and permission from the student to record the session before starting.
4. Send an e-mail with the URL to access the videoconference session and the time of the session to the people who have expressed interest in participating in the defence session of the doctoral thesis by videoconference.

Article 4. Act of defending the thesis

The secretary will act as moderator of the videoconference room.

The act of defending the thesis will be carried out as follows:

1. 15 minutes before the time established in the call, the moderator and the doctoral student will access the videoconference room created for the defence in order to check that everything is working properly.
2. Before starting, members of the panel and the doctoral student who are acting online must activate the camera and audio. Guests in the online session must have their camera and microphone turned off.
3. If the doctoral student undertakes the defence online, his / her identification will be checked from his / her DNI or equivalent accrediting document and a certificate of identification will be issued (model document in Annex 3).

4. Inform the doctoral student and the members of the panel that, given the public nature of the session, their interventions (image and voice) will be viewed by the people who follow them through the enabled channels.
5. After the defence, so that the panel can carry out its deliberation, the members of the panel will leave the videoconference session where the thesis is defended and will enter the other videoconference session created to undertake the deliberation. The moderator will interrupt the recording. If the doctoral student and part of the public attend the defence in person, the panel will ask them to leave the thesis defence room before deliberation.
6. Once the deliberation by the panel is complete, the panel will leave the videoconference session created for the deliberation and will re-enter the videoconference session where the thesis was defended. If the doctoral student and part of the public are attending the defence in person, they will be allowed to enter the room of the thesis defence at this time and the president will announce the qualification of the thesis in accordance with the provisions of current legislation.
7. The members of the panel will digitally sign the minutes of the doctoral dissertation defence and send them to the e-mail address of the secretary of the panel.
8. The secretary, and all members of the panel who are required to sign the document, will digitally sign the minutes of the defence. The secretary will send the minutes, the candidate's identification certificate and the reports signed by all the members of the panel to the email address: comissio.doctorat@udg.edu. If any of the signatories does not have a digital signature, all signatures will be handwritten, and the secretary will be in charge of managing the signature and delivering all documents once signed to the academic secretariat of the doctoral school.
9. The secretary will also remind the members of the panel that they must cast their vote for awarding of the mention “cum laude” (Appendix 4). The person responsible for the management of the applications of the Doctoral School of the UdG will visualize the result of the secret ballot for the concession of the mention “cum laude”. A report of the ballot will be made, and this result will be communicated to the doctoral student, to the thesis supervisor, to the members of the panel and to the Academic Committee of the corresponding doctoral programme. This procedure must be completed in order to close the file for the defence of the doctoral student’s thesis so that he / she can apply for the doctoral degree.
10. The Doctoral School will notify that all the documents have been received correctly or which documents are missing.

Repeal provision

The agreement of the Management Committee of the Doctoral School of the University of Girona, of 10 May, 2021, which establishes the procedure for the reading and defence of doctoral theses by videoconference, is repealed.

Final Provision. Implementation

These regulations will enter into force the day after its publication on the website of the University of Girona, in accordance with the provisions of article 45 of Law 39/2015, of 1 October of the common administrative procedure of the public administrations and article 58

of Law 26/2010, of 3 August, on the legal and procedural regime of the public administrations of Catalonia.

Annexes

- Annex 1. [Application for thesis defence through videoconference](#) (PDF)
- Annex 2. [Approval of the thesis defence through videoconference](#) (Word)
- Annex 3. [Identification of the doctoral candidate](#) (Word)
- Annex 4. [Text explaining the secret ballot for the Cum Laude via Google Forms](#) (PDF)