

Guidelines for conducting Dr sc hum oral thesis examinations online during the period of corona restrictions

Based on § 2 of the Ordinance of the State Government on infection-protection measures against the spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus (Corona Ordinance - CoronaVO) of March 17, 2020, in the version of April 17, 2020, the study program at the state's universities will be continued in digital formats from April 20, 2020. During the implementation period of the infection-protection measures, final oral examinations of Dr sc hum candidates specified in §10 of the Dr sc hum Promotionsordnung may be conducted electronically via a video and audio link (video conference) according to the following guidelines.

Application procedure

1. The candidate needs to apply to the Promotionsbüro in writing to ask for permission to conduct the examination electronically. This must be done using an application form provided by the Promotionsbüro.
2. The candidate needs to provide a convincing reason why he/she is unable to participate in an examination in which the examiners and examinee are physically present in the same room.
3. Unless the candidate can provide a reason why the examination needs to be conducted in private rooms (for example due to local COVID-19 restrictions), the examination must be held in a public location (e.g. school, library or university building).
4. The candidate must be supervised during the examination by a reliable and suitable person on site, for example an objective observer with an academic position of at least postdoctoral level. The observer's task is to supervise the proper conduct of the examination and to verify that the candidate has not used any improper aids. The observer must confirm their participation to the Promotionsbüro in writing before the examination, and disclose their name, place of work/country, professional position and relationship to the candidate.

If it is not possible for the candidate to identify such a supervisor for the examination, for example due to local COVID-19 restrictions, then this needs to be convincingly reasoned in the application to hold the examination electronically

5. The examinee needs to provide written assurance that she/he will not use inadmissible aids.
6. Permission to conduct the oral examination electronically is granted by the Promotionsausschuss after evaluation of the application documents. The Promotionsausschuss can delegate responsibility for evaluating the application documents and for granting permission to conduct the oral examination electronically to the Chair of the Promotionsausschuss, if that is deemed appropriate.

Additional measures to be implemented during the electronic oral examination.

1. The examining committee shall establish the identity of the examinee and the observer prior to the beginning of the examination by through the inspection of identification documents that unambiguously prove the identity of the examinee and the observer.
2. The examinee is responsible for ensuring an adequate internet connection locally that will deliver a stable and reliable picture and sound connection, as well as the mutual visibility and audibility of the examinee and the examining persons during the entire examination process. In case the internet connection fails, the question during which the connection is interrupted cannot not be repeated, but a new question must be asked instead.

If interruption of the examination is necessary due to connection problems, recommendations regarding partial recognition of the examination or continuation of the examination at a later date can be made. In case of a substantial disturbance of the picture and sound transmission, the examining committee can cancel the examination and request that the examination be repeated in its entirety on another date.

3. The protocol about the course of the examination should include statements regarding the following points:

- the physical location of the examinee during the examination;
- that the identity of the candidate and the supervisor was properly verified before the start of the examination;
- that the local supervisor confirmed that no unauthorized aids were used
- that the internet connection was adequate for the examination to be carried out correctly.

4. The recording of the video examination is prohibited.