

The use of online technology at upcoming PhD defence ceremonies

A memo regarding this has been discussed in the meeting of the Doctorate Board on 5 March 2021, the outcome of which has been presented to the faculties.

Baseline

The standard is and will remain that the defence ceremony will take place on location, based on art. 32 section 2 of the Doctorate Regulations:

The defence ceremony will take place at a location determined by the Doctorate Board of the University.

- ***The doctoral candidate must be physically present at the defence ceremony***

Only under highly exceptional circumstances can the doctoral candidate participate online from a different location. The supervisor should timely submit a motivated request to the dean. After approval from the dean it will be presented to the Doctorate Board for ratification.

Examples of highly exceptional circumstances could be:

- illness, private circumstances, (travel) limitations due to a situation in home country, in all cases of a severe and lengthy nature

If the doctoral candidate participates online (from a different location), this will be the case for all participants and there will be no on-site defence ceremony.

- ***The (co-)supervisor(s) must be physically present at the defence ceremony***

Article 35, section 4 of the Doctorate Regulations applies: "The supervisor(s) and co-supervisor(s) are all required to attend the ceremony, situations of force majeure excepted."

- ***The majority of the other members of the committee must be present at the defence ceremony***

Committee members associated with the own university should be physically present. Committee members of sister universities within the Benelux are expected to be present. It applies to both categories that in the case of absence by force majeure they are replaced by a guest opponent, according to art. 35 section 6 of the Doctorate Regulations

Committee members from outside the Benelux can participate online on request. This is recommended in order to obtain a better balance between travel time, burden on the environment and the importance of physical presence during the defence ceremony, and coincides with the aim towards more sustainability within the UvA and society.