

Guidelines from the Board of the University 2020/004 15-04-2020

Guidelines concerning alternative PhD ceremonies at the UG

As a consequence of the coronavirus crisis, it is currently impossible to organize PhD ceremonies in the regular way.

Following approval by the Committee of Deans, the Board of the University has therefore decided to implement the following deviations from the University of Groningen PhD Regulations:

Digital ceremonies based in the Aula

All PhD ceremonies will take place digitally until further notice. Only the chair and the PhD student will be present in the Aula (at a considerable distance from each other). The other members of the PhD Committee, the supervisor(s) and any relevant experts will attend the ceremony via video conference. No paranymphs will be involved. Questions from the audience will not be possible. A beadle will supervise the ceremony and will declare the beginning and end of the public defence.

Upon request, the presence of the supervisor in the Aula will be allowed.

Digital facilities

An IT system will be used to host the video conferences. Modern equipment is available and can be used to this end in the Aula (or in a different room in the Academy Building). The digital aspect of the proceedings will be supervised by a technician from the UG. The ceremony may be made publicly accessible via a live stream. The members of the PhD Committee and the supervisor(s) will have private discussions both before and after the public defence. The ceremony will end with the laudatory speech and the presentation of the PhD degree certificate. In the event of technical problems with the video conference, the chair will be authorized to extend the public PhD defence by the amount of time that was lost.

PhD degree certificate and meeting form

The PhD degree ceremony will be prepared two weeks before the date of the ceremony, including digital signatures of the secretary and supervisor. The date of the ceremony will be stated on the degree certificate. The chair will physically sign the paper certificate during the private discussion. The secretary will have to be appointed at least three weeks before the date of the ceremony so that their signature can also be included on the certificate in advance. The PhD Office will generate the meeting form including digital signatures before the PhD ceremony. The chair will check the form during the private discussion and report any deviations to the PhD Office.

Adapted protocol

An adapted version of the protocol for the PhD ceremony will be drawn up.

Cum laude

Any votes on *cum laude* predicates will be held orally during the digital private discussion. This means that the votes will not be anonymous.

Date and time of the ceremony

All PhD ceremonies will in principle be held on the dates and times registered in Hora Finita. All PhD students will be given a choice between having a digital ceremony or postponing it until a regular PhD ceremony can be held. PhD students who choose to postpone their ceremony do not qualify for an extension of their appointment or scholarship.

Location of the ceremony

All PhD ceremonies are in principle held in the Aula of the Academy Building, but different arrangements can be made in mutual consultation. Possible alternatives include the faculty rooms, the Senate Room or the *Curatorenkamer*. However, for practical reasons, it is preferable to hold the ceremonies in the same room whenever possible. UMCG PhD ceremonies may be held at the UMCG if preferred. A beadle will be available to attend such ceremonies.

PhD student not present or total lockdown

In the event that a PhD student is unable to physically attend their ceremony, or if the government declares a state of total lockdown, the entire PhD ceremony will be held digitally. This means that the chair and the PhD student will also attend the video conference. There will be no physical ceremony location, no beadle and no observer. The time will be kept by the secretary. The degree certificate will be signed digitally by all relevant parties and then sent to the graduate by registered mail. Invitees can attend the public part of the ceremony via a live stream.

Rescheduling cancelled ceremonies

Extra time slots will be made available for rescheduling cancelled ceremonies. There will be more time slots available on Tuesdays, as inaugural lectures are being postponed. PhD ceremonies can also be held in the evenings (two per evening). Once this crisis is over, a limited number of PhD ceremonies can be held in parallel in the Aula and the Senate Room, although the latter room has limited availability.

Practical matters

- Dress codes can be handled in a flexible way as PhD students may, for example, have difficulty renting suits. The requirement that smart clothing must be worn will, however, be maintained.
- PhD supervisors can collect their toga from the Academy Building by appointment.
- As it will not be possible to hold a drinks reception after the ceremony, we will look into the possibility of having a bouquet of flowers ready for the graduate instead.

The official text is the Dutch version of the Guidelines from the Board of the University 2020/004. Guidelines concerning alternative PhD ceremonies at the UG. Any discrepancies or differences created in the translation are not binding and have no legal effect for compliance or enforcement purposes. If any questions arise concerning the accuracy of the information presented by the translated version of the Guideline, please refer to the official Dutch version.