

2020-03-17

PM

Faculty Board

Executive officer

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Instructions regarding public defences and licentiate seminars on account of the outbreak of Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (HF), the defence of a thesis must be public (HF, Ch. 6 Section 33). Local regulations concerning public defences and licentiate seminars are to be found in the Rules and Regulations for Third-cycle Studies at Mälardalen University (Reg. no 2016/1961).

Travel restrictions as a result of the ongoing outbreak of the coronavirus can at short notice affect the possibilities of the Faculty Reviewer and members of the Examining Committee to attend public defences and licentiate seminars. The Faculty Board would therefore like to clarify the instructions regarding public defences and licentiate seminars, and what measures can be taken for public defences and licentiate seminars to be carried out as planned under the present circumstances.

- Decisions prior to the day of the public defence regarding changes in the Examining Committee, the Faculty Reviewer or the time are in the first instance to be made by the committee concerned in accordance with that committee's customary decision-making procedure. Should time restrictions prevent a committee decision, changes may also be made by the Pro-Dean concerned.
- Only one reserve is appointed in connection with applications for a public defence or licentiate seminar, but the Faculty Board would prefer that one or two more people can be appointed as reserves.
- The defence of a thesis must be public, which means that it needs to be made accessible for digital participation, or arranged in a venue in which the general public is permitted to be present.
- The respondent and the Chair of the public defence or licentiate seminar must be present in the designated venue at Mälardalen University unless particular reasons prevent this, in which case an application for exemption must be made. This is so that the University is able to guarantee that cheating is prevented.

- The Faculty Reviewer and members of the Examining Committee may participate via a link (the organiser will decide on a suitable technical solution, e.g. Zoom/Teams) as long as the Covid-19 outbreak continues or was continuing when the decision for the public defence or licentiate seminar was taken.

- All the members of the Examining Committee must participate in the examining meeting on completion of the public defence or licentiate seminar. This will apply even when someone has participated via a link. In such cases a new private digital meeting may need to be arranged. All signatures must appear on all the obligatory documents; however, scanned signatures may also be allowed. This means that there may be several scanned copies of the same examination certificate.

- If the Faculty Reviewer and /or one or more members take part via a link the following will apply:
 - The Faculty Reviewer or a member taking part via a link must be able to see and hear the respondent and all the presentations in the venue. All people who are essential for carrying out the public defence or licentiate seminar and who are taking part via a link, or in the venue, must also be able to hear everything that is said.

 - For the Faculty Reviewer or members who are present via a link, direct contact by email and telephone with the Chair of the public defence must be available. (This is so that any technical problems can be dealt with.)

 - If the Faculty Reviewer and /or one or more members take part via a link, the appointed reserve(s) must be present in the venue or via a link. Should one person via a link lose contact, the reserve can then go in and take part in the examination.

 - The Faculty Reviewer must be able to study the respondent's presentation and be able to take part throughout the entire public defence. Members of the Examining Committee must be able to take part in the entire public defence or licentiate seminar. In case technical faults prevent the above requirements from being met, despite reserves coming in as replacements, the public defence must be repeated or postponed.

- A public defence in which the Faculty Reviewer and all the members of the Examining Committee take part via a link should be avoided if at all possible.

- It is the responsibility of the School for any arrangements made via a link; the Faculty Board has no resources or facilities intended for this purpose.