



Resolution of 26 March 2020 by the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning establishing the necessary organisational measures and instructions for the procedures to submit and defend doctoral theses

In accordance with the third additional provision of Royal Decree 463/2020 of 14 March declaring a state of alert with regard to the management of the health emergency triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the emergency measures implemented by the Rector in the Resolution of 15 March 2020 following the national state of alert declared by Royal Decree 463/2020 which establishes that, due to the suspension of administrative deadlines, the competent body may agree to such organisational measures and instructions as are strictly necessary to avoid serious prejudice to the rights of the claimant in the procedures, the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning of the University of Granada has determined that:

First. In view of the impossibility of holding face-to-face doctoral thesis defences, the Management Committees of the doctoral schools may authorise the holding of said defences through the participation of the members of the board of examiners and doctoral candidate via a videoconference platform, which will be provided by the corresponding doctoral school. Moreover, the defence must be held in a public session through this means of communication.

Second. The presentation and defence of the doctoral thesis via videoconference must meet the following requirements, which will be fulfilled prior to the defence:

1. The doctoral candidate must request authorisation to defend the thesis from the Management Committee of the corresponding doctoral school.
2. The members of the board of examiners must state their availability to hold the defence through this means of communication.
3. The members of the board of examiners and the doctoral candidate must agree to use the platform provided by the corresponding doctoral school for the creation of the virtual spaces. They must also confirm that they have access to the technology needed to participate in the evaluation process using the proposed system.
4. The members of the board of examiners must state that they understand how to use the IT tool provided for the secret voting process employed to award a *Cum laude* mention, if applicable.
5. All the participants must accept the protocol of action established in this Resolution.



6. The International School for Postgraduate Studies (EIP) will run a separate virtual session in order to guarantee the confidentiality of the deliberations conducted by the members of the board of examiners.

Third. Once the doctoral thesis defence has taken place, the doctoral candidate will be able to request an accreditation certificate and, if applicable, begin the procedures necessary for the issuing of the corresponding doctoral degree certificate.

Fourth. The protocol of action for the submission and defence of doctoral theses is as follows:

1) The doctoral candidate must submit their thesis via the online “Depósito de Tesis” (thesis submission) platform, which will be made available to those candidates who meet the requirements to start the procedure. Likewise, the doctoral candidate must upload a reasoned request to the Academic Monitoring Portal for Doctoral Students justifying the submission and defence of the thesis.

2) The full sequence of steps indicated on the online “Depósito de Tesis” platform regarding the authorisation of the defence must be followed.

3) Given that the aforementioned platform does not make provisions for items 2-5 of the second section of this Resolution, the doctoral candidate and/or their thesis supervisor(s) must compile the corresponding documents. These mandatory documents must be submitted as email messages in PDF format and must clearly indicate the email addresses of the sender and recipient. The doctoral candidate must send these files to doctoradolecturatesis@ugr.es so that they can be checked and verified. These email messages must be written either in Spanish or English.

4) The Academic Committee of the corresponding doctoral programme will approve, where applicable, the doctoral thesis defence, in an online session convened by the coordinator of the programme.

5) The Management Committee of the corresponding doctoral school will authorise, where applicable, the doctoral thesis defence and approve the proposed board of examiners in an online session convened by the thesis supervisor.

6) The International School for Postgraduate Studies (EIP) will notify the doctoral candidate, the secretary and the other members of the board of examiners by email that the thesis defence has been authorised. The doctoral candidate must then send a copy of their thesis to all the members of the board of examiners. The secretary of the board will send an email to doctoradolecturatesis@ugr.es communicating the date and time of the defence, and indicating the doctoral candidate’s name, title of the doctoral thesis, supervisor(s), corresponding doctoral programme, and the members of the board of examiners, as established by current regulations. The corresponding doctoral school will send this information to the university community by email, together with the URL of



the online public session. This email will also be sent to the secretary, who will forward it to the other members of the board of examiners and the doctoral candidate. This URL will not require credentials (a password) to access the session.

7) The secretary will act as the 'host' of the videoconference and will summon the other members of the board of examiners and the doctoral candidate at least 15 minutes before the public presentation starts in order to carry out connection tests and also to confirm that the members of the board have access to their email accounts, thereby ensuring their full and effective participation in all aspects of the defence and evaluation process. The secretary of the board of examiners will confirm the identity of the doctoral candidate, who must show their identity card on screen to all members of the board of examiners. If a member of the university community or of the general public connects to the videoconference before the scheduled time of the defence and interferes with it, the secretary of the board of examiners will expel them using the software tools available for such purposes, allowing them to access the session at the scheduled time. Once all the aforementioned aspects have been verified, the secretary of the board of examiners will send an email to doctoradolecturatesis@ugr.es to confirm that everything is in order and that the defence may take place. The message must have the following format:

I, [Name and surname], with Passport/ID number [...], as Secretary of the board of examiners, hereby CERTIFY that I have confirmed the identity of the doctoral candidate in the thesis defence conducted via videoconference on [Date] as [Name and surname of the doctoral candidate] with Passport/ID number [...].

8) The public session may then commence. Should unsolvable technical problems occur for 30 minutes, the chairperson will terminate the defence, which will automatically be declared null and void.

9) After the defence, the board of examiners will mark the doctoral thesis using a separate, parallel virtual space in which the board can deliberate. The corresponding doctoral school must send the URL of this second virtual space and the login credentials (passwords) to the secretary of the board of examiners before the defence is held. Likewise, the secretary of the board of examiners will send said information by email to all members of the board of examiners once the public defence has concluded. As soon as a mark has been awarded, the chairperson will terminate the deliberation process, the secretary of the board of examiners will close the virtual space used for the deliberations, and the board of examiners will return to the virtual space used for the defence, whereupon the chairperson will publicly announce the mark awarded. Finally, the secretary of the board of examiners will also close the virtual space used for the defence.

10) The secretary of the board of examiners will complete the assessment report on the doctoral thesis and its defence once it has been discussed by the members of the board



of examiners via the virtual space used for the deliberations. The content must be agreed upon verbally or, where appropriate, sent by email to the members of the board in an editable format so that they can correct and approve it. The secretary will then send the certificate of thesis defence evaluation (*acta*) in PDF format to the members of the board of examiners, who will sign it electronically. If one or several members of the board of examiners do not have an electronic signature, the secretary will sign the certificate in the order in which they have participated. To do this, the secretary must receive an email from the member of the board in which they authorise the secretary to sign the document on their behalf. This email message may be obtained by the secretary before the day of the defence, and a copy of it must be attached in PDF format to the certificate of thesis defence evaluation (*acta*). The secretary of the board of examiners will send all these documents to doctoradolecturatesis@ugr.es

11) Once the corresponding doctoral school has received the certificate of thesis defence evaluation (*acta*) and assessment report, and provided that the doctoral thesis has been unanimously assessed as “Excellent” (*Sobresaliente*), the school will send an email to each member of the board of examiners indicating the URL and the corresponding credentials (passwords) so that they can access the form and vote on whether or not to award the candidate a *Cum laude* mention. The doctoral school will disable the form once 24 hours have elapsed since the email was sent. Only one vote per member of the board of examiners will be allowed and they will be required to confirm their vote. Failure of any member to vote before the form is disabled entails that the *Cum laude* mention will not be awarded. The secretary will ensure that all members of the board of examiners receive the message and will report any incidents to the corresponding doctoral school by sending an email to doctoradolecturatesis@ugr.es. The secretary will thoroughly inform all members of the board of examiners about this procedure during the aforementioned deliberation session.

12) Once all the procedures above have been completed, the secretary of the board of examiners will receive a message from the corresponding doctoral school indicating that they must access, using the corresponding URL, the virtual space in which they will open, in the presence of a civil servant from the International School for Postgraduate Studies (EIP), the form containing the secret votes on the *Cum laude* mention. The result of this voting process will be communicated to the doctoral candidate and the members of the board of examiners of the corresponding doctoral school. This result will also be registered by means of a screenshot taken by the civil servant from the EIP, which must be stored in the candidate’s academic record.