

Guidelines for Chairing a PhD Defence

As Chair of the PhD Defence your job is to make sure the defence is carried out properly. You should be decent competent and employed at Stockholm University. You should not have a conflict of interest with the respondent, their supervisor or co-supervisors. You are not part of the examination committee.

At the Public Defence

Your job is to open the proceedings by presenting the PhD candidate, her/his thesis title, supervisor and co-supervisors. You will then introduce the opponent, the examination committee and quickly brief the audience on the day's procedure.

The Public Defence in Brief

1. The PhD candidate makes a 30 minute presentation
2. The opponent makes a 10-15 minute presentation putting the thesis into the context of the research field
3. The opponent and PhD candidate then have a scientific discussion about the thesis
4. The examination committee questions the PhD candidate
5. The audience has the opportunity to question the PhD candidate
6. The public defence is closed

During the Closed Committee Discussion

This is the second step in the process where the committee members convene together with the opponent and the main supervisor. As Chair of the PhD Defence you start this meeting but your role is simply to make sure that the examination committee appoints a chair of the examination committee. You must also inform them about signing the disputation protocol after which time you leave.

Below is a "script" for you to use as a *basis* for your role as Chair of the PhD Defence. Be sure to have information about invited participants and check how to say their names properly. You can get this information from the "disputationsblankett" and the supervisors. Please be sure to express your thanks for their time and effort.

At the Public Defence

Introduction by the Chair of the PhD Defence (ordförande)

Good morning/afternoon. It's **start time** so we can begin the day's proceedings. Welcome to **respondent's name** PhD Defence.

My name is **your name**, and I am **your position** here at the Department of Geological Sciences (IGV) at Stockholm University. I will be acting as chair of this PhD defence today.

It is my role to:

1. Explain how this will all work.
2. Ensure that the defence is carried out in accordance with the regulations at Stockholm University.

*If on Zoom: Due to on-going Covid-19 restrictions, this defence is taking place by Zoom. The thesis evaluation team are spread out in various places (XXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX). **Respondent's name** is in **room** here at IGV.*

Before the defence officially begins I will start with introductions then summarize the procedure.

The title of **Respondent's name** PhD is:
Thesis title

The main supervisor is:
Supervisor's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

Co-Supervisors are:
Co-supervisor's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

Co-supervisor's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

The examination panel consists of an opponent (comparable to a combination of prosecution and defence layer!) and a committee composed of 3 members (comparable to the judge and jury) plus a reserve member.

The opponent is:
Opponent's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

The committee consists of:
Committee Member 1's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

Committee Member 2's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

Committee Member 3's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

Our reserve committee member is:

Reserve Member's title, name, department, university, role and expertise

On behalf of the supervisors and Stockholm University, I thank *Opponent's title and name, Committee Member 1 title and name, Committee Member 2 title and name, Committee Member 3 title and name* and *Reserve Member title and name* for agreeing to examine this PhD.

An Overview of the Procedure

Respondent's name will speak first, giving an approximately 30-minute presentation of his/her research and pointing out any errors in the published thesis.

The floor is then given to the opponent, *Opponent's title and name*, who will give a short overview (15 minutes) of the broader research field relevant to the respondent's thesis work, and place the new research in context.

After this we will pause for a 5-minute break. For those of you on site, this would be an appropriate time to leave if you do not intend to stay for the entire defence.

Thereafter, the opponent will lead a critical discussion of the thesis with the respondent. This usually takes about 1 hour.

When *Opponent's title and name* is satisfied, the floor is given to the examining committee, *Committee Member 1 title and name, Committee Member 2 title and name, Committee Member 3 title and name* and *Reserve Member title and name* who will ask additional questions.

Finally, the floor is open to the public to ask questions. You may ask a question in the Zoom chat or indicate that you would like to speak via Zoom by raising your virtual hand.

When there are no more questions I will announce the official defence closed.

When the defence is closed, I will complete and sign a faculty document stating that the thesis defence has taken place following university procedure, and hand it over to the examining committee chairperson.

The examining committee will then retire to a private meeting to vote on the respondents PhD exam (pass or fail).

After about ~15 minutes the committee and opponent will return from their meeting to announce the result. The audience is welcome to wait in the main Zoom meeting or if we are on site, in the lunchroom on the 4th floor where refreshments are being served.

***Final reminder, audience on-line, please cameras and microphones off!
If anyone gets 'lost' in Zoom space please try to re-enter by going back to the original Zoom link.***

On this note, please ***Respondent's name*** take the floor.

RESPONDENT PRESENTS

Thank you ***Respondent's name*** for that very nice summary of your PhD thesis.

I will now ask the opponent ***Opponent's title and name*** to now set ***Respondent's name*** work into a broader research context (~15 minutes).

***PAUSE FOR 5 MINUTE BREAK
(this is when people can leave if on site)***

OPPONENT QUESTIONING (ca 1 hour)

Thank you for an interesting discussion! We can now turn to the committee and give them an opportunity to ask ***Respondent's name*** about his/her work.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONING

Committee Member 1 title and name
Committee Member 2 title and name
Committee Member 3 title and name
Reserve Member title and name

I would like to thank the committee for the questions and reflections. We can now move on to the last phase of the public defence by opening the floor to the public.

PUBLIC QUESTIONING

With that I would like to extend a final thank you: On behalf of the supervisors and Stockholm University, I thank ***Committee Member 1 title and name, Committee Member 2 title and name, Committee Member 3 title and name*** and ***Reserve Member title and name*** for your time and for an interesting and challenging discussion.

I now declare the public portion of the PhD defence closed. I would ask that the supervisor, opponent and the committee members join me in a separate meeting room (*either physically or a zoom breakout room depending*).

During the Closed Committee Discussion

Once the committee is assembled it is your responsibility to inform the committee about signing of the 'PROTOCOL for dissertation defence at Stockholm University'. If the committee is on-site they must sign the form before they leave to announce the decision. For defences on Zoom the Chair of the PhD Defence signs the protocol for the committee but each committee member must email their approval of this (see next page). The signed protocol is sent to the registrar and a copy is kept by the Director of PhD Studies.

The Chair of the PhD Defence must ensure that the committee appoints a chairperson to take responsibility for reporting the decision of the committee. This chair will sign the form then submit this signed protocol to Malin. Once the chairperson of the committee is selected you may leave the meeting.

The examination committee then has the opportunity to ask the supervisor about the student. Once such questions are satisfied the supervisor should leave before any deliberations are made. The committee then returns to the original Zoom room or to the lunch room on the 4th floor where the chairperson gives their decision.

Signing the Protocol when on Zoom

When holding a defence by Zoom you need to sign the disputation protocol on behalf of the examination committee. You can send the following mail out prior to the defence to ensure sure this happens:

Dear PhD Examining Committee,

I will be chairing the PhD defense of *Respondent's name* this *Date*.

Firstly, I thank you on behalf of Stockholm University for agreeing to take part in this defense.

Due to the on-going need to have the defense by distance I must make you aware of the routine currently in place for signing the protocol at the end of the defense.

1. The Chair of the PhD Defence (in this case myself, *your name*) will state in the 'PROTOCOL for dissertation defence at Stockholm University' that all the members of the examination committee were present by distance and that the Chair of the PhD Defence is signing the protocol on their behalf.

2. Immediately after the examination committee has made its decision, each of the committee members (not the opponent or reserve) must send an email to the Chair of the PhD Defence (*your name*) to certify that they agree with the decision. You may use the text below and change as appropriate and mail to me at *your email*.

This is to confirm that I *pass/fail* the PhD Thesis of *Respondent's name* and that I allow *Chair of the PhD Defence name* to sign the 'PROTOCOL for dissertation defence at Stockholm University' on my behalf.

These emails will be printed and form the appendix to the dissertation protocol, the original paper copy of which will be sent to the registrar and a copy kept at the department.

Many thanks in advance

Your Name