Universität Rostock
Traditio et Innovatio

Based on the decision of the Academic Senate of the University of Rostock on April 3, 2020, the University of Rostock has decided to convert its range of courses, as far as possible, to formats without attendance. To ensure that examinations can be carried out even during the period of the physical-distancing there is the possibility of holding colloquia for final theses (Bachelor's/ Master's thesis) as well as final presentations of project work via video conference. This applies in particular to the still uncompleted exams from the exam period from March 16 to March 31, 2020, and the exams of the following semesters until the resumption of presence. To ensure valid quality standards are upheld, the Rectorate defined the following general guidelines for the realisation of online colloquia on April 15, 2020.

Framework

When carrying out online colloquia by video conference, it is important to observe the voluntary principle. This means that a switch to this type of examination is voluntary for all participants, i.e. students, examiners and commission members. Accordingly, the consent of the student must be obtained in advance by e-mail. The student must confirm that s*he has read and understood these guidelines and that s*he agrees to the conditions stated. You can find a sample text for the declaration of consent at the end of this document.

If a colloquium takes place as an online colloquium, the examination law provisions apply following the applicable examination regulations.

- The *duration of the online colloquium* has to be equivalent to that of a face-to-face colloquium.
- The *level of difficulty*, choice of topics, supportive equipment as well as tested competences in the discussion of the online colloquium must be equivalent to a face-to-face colloquium.
- To test the technical conditions and get to know the program, a corresponding *preparation time* should be added (approx. 10 min). The participants could also have a test meeting in advance (e.g. the day before).
- In case of *serious technical problems*, both the student and the examiner can cancel the exam.
- Recording of the exam is prohibited.
- The protocol for the online colloquium has to be written in the same structure as for a face-to-face colloquium; one of the examiners is responsible for this. The forms of the respective study programmes for colloquia (defence of the Bachelor's/ Master's thesis, student research project, etc.) have to be used.

Video conference systems such as DFNconf, zoom, gotoMeeting, skype or BigBlueButton are suitable for the test. The BigBlueButton conference system is linked in the StudIP portal.

Participants
- In each colloquium, only one student sits for the exam.
- The number of examiners is based on the applicable examination regulations as well as identical to the number and composition of the commission specified in the attendance format (e.g. commissions for the defence of Bachelor's / Master's thesis). However, at least 2 examiners must be involved in all colloquia (e.g. when completing project work).

- If an audience is admitted to a presence colloquium following the applicable examination regulations, they are also admitted to an online colloquium. The guests have to register themselves with one of the examiners at least 1 working day before the colloquium. In case of a public announcement, the link to the online colloquium has to be added.

Requirements

To conduct an online colloquium, all participants need

- a computer / notebook / tablet / smartphone with a camera, audio system and microphone as well as
- stable internet access.
- In addition, everyone involved must ensure a trouble-free environment. This includes no other people in the same room and no expected phone calls during the time of the colloquium. If the presence of other people in the room cannot be avoided (for example small children), students have to discuss this individually with their examiners in advance.
- If possible, the availability of the participants via phonecall should be ensured for the case of technical problems. If this is not possible, communication will be by e-mail.

Preparation and execution

1. In the beginning of the video call, all participants should get to know the program in a short preparation time (approx. 10 min). It is also possible to have a test meeting before the actual colloquium. If everyone is familiar with the technical details and technical problems are excluded, the examiners and the student can go through the planned course of the colloquium together and the examiners can explain the permitted aids.
2. *(optional)* If a common electronic whiteboard or similar technical equipment can be used, their function must also be briefly tested before the actual colloquium.
3. If the student is not personally known, an identity check has to be carried out at the beginning by showing a photo identification (like identity card, passport, driver's license or similar photo document) via the camera.
4. In order to show that the door is closed, no other people are in the room and no unauthorized aids are used, the student has to do a 360° rotation of the webcam. During the exam, this may be repeated if requested by the examiners.
5. Listeners are not allowed to switch on their microphones during the entire course of the colloquium.

The colloquium can then begin. In most cases, this will consist of a presentation/ talk followed by a discussion.

6. The presentation/ talk must be given live.
7. In the subsequent discussion part, one of the examiners is responsible for technical moderation.

At the end of the colloquium, the student and all guests leave the video conference. If the video conferencing system offers separate video rooms and the examiners want to use them, this is also possible to discuss the grade.

8. As soon as the grading process is finished, the student will be informed by e-mail or the text function of the video conference system that s*he should switch back to the conference.

9. Then, the announcement and justification of the grade are made.

10. The protocol drawn up during the colloquium will be sent to the relevant study office. The grade booking takes place in the examination system.

Procedure in the event of exceptional occurrences

- If the internet connection is interrupted during the online colloquium, an attempt to continue the colloquium must be made as soon as possible.
- If the connection is interrupted repeatedly, the colloquium must be stopped and held at a different time.
- All disruptions in the course of the colloquium have to be documented in the protocol, specifying the type, scope and duration.
- If there is suspicion of attempted fraud during the colloquium, the student can be asked to repeat the 360° rotation of the webcam. In case the doubts cannot be dispelled, the colloquium will be stopped by the examiners with a corresponding note in the protocol.
- Technical problems of the participating guests do not lead to an interruption of the colloquium.

Form for the declaration of consent

I hereby apply to conduct my [*Bachelor's / Master's thesis / Colloquium*] in [*summer / winter semester + year*] as an online colloquium.

I have read the "Guidelines for the realisation of online colloquia" of the University of Rostock and agree with the mentioned conditions.

I also agree with the use of the platform [*name of the video conference system*] for the examination and the resulting data protection regulations.

Place, Date   Name