COVID-19-related measures taken by GAUSS - Information for GAUSS doctoral students
(without GGNB)
(Last update: 19.03.2020)

In addition to the messages by the President of the University, which you receive at your student email accounts, we would like to inform you of the following measures taken in the light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis:

(1) GAUSS Office, the deaneries of the mathematics and natural science faculties and correspondence
- The GAUSS Office and the deaneries of the mathematics and natural science faculties are closed until further notice. In urgent cases you can reach us via email.
- Please do not send any documents by post – only send electronic versions (scans). We do not know when we will be back in the office – we can only process documents if we receive them electronically.
- All correspondence (admission to examination, invitations, etc.) will only be sent by e-mail.

(2) GAUSS and GGNB courses
- All courses (skills, methods, industry excursions, career workshops and career impulse sessions) organized by the GAUSS and GGNB Offices are cancelled until further notice.
- Exception: The online project management course “Fast Forward”, offered by Dr. Nadine Sinclair will be held as originally scheduled.

(3) Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings
- It is recommended that all TAC meetings scheduled for the coming weeks (at least until 20 April 2020) are postponed unless there is an important reason for keeping the envisaged date. Please contact the members of your TAC to discuss the need for postponing your next meeting.
- In case of an important reason, it is possible to hold your TAC meeting by video-conferencing. The recommendations by the data protection officer of the University apply. Face-to-face meetings are not permitted.
- The GAUSS Office will be able to assist with technical issues regarding your video-based TAC meeting.
- The signatures of the TAC members for the video-based TAC meeting can be collected within one month after the current COVID-19-related state of emergency has ended.
- Likewise, applications for thesis extension should be discussed in the virtual TAC meeting and be confirmed to the deaneries by email.

(4) Extension of date for submission of doctoral thesis
To account for delays caused by the COVID-19 crisis, the deadline for submission of the doctoral thesis will be extended for ALL GAUSS doctoral candidates by three months. We will closely observe the future development of the situation and will consider additional flexibility if needed.
(5) Thesis submissions

- The submission of your doctoral thesis (dissertation) will have to be made electronically until further notice. For electronic submission, inform at first your deanery and the GAUSS Office, which will then send information to the PhD student how to upload the thesis in a GWDG ownCloud folder.

- On the day of submission, please send us two PDF files: (i) The complete dissertation identical with the print version (please keep in mind that the Affidavit is an essential part of your thesis and needs to be signed), and (ii) one PDF that includes all completed and signed forms as a scan (see handout “Countdown to doctoral degree”). If you don’t have access to a scanner, you can take photos of the forms (which must be clear enough to read) and send them as a combined word or PDF file.

- The electronic submission of your dissertation with all relevant documents ensures that you have kept the official submission deadline. Based on the electronic submission, the further process towards the completion of your doctorate will be initiated. This includes the electronic transmission of your thesis to the reviewers for further assessment and your admission to the doctoral examination. For the electronic transmission and assessment, the GWDG ownCloud service will be used.

- Please note that you still need to print one hardcopy which we will need for our archive later. This hardcopy needs to be submitted to the GAUSS Office within one month after the current COVID-19-related state of emergency has ended.

- Please discuss with your examination board whether a member may request a printed version for his/her personal use.

(6) Oral doctoral examinations (Disputations)

- It is strongly recommended that all disputations scheduled for the coming weeks (at least until 20 April 2020) are postponed unless there is an important reason for keeping the envisaged date. According to the current assessment, we recommend to postpone the date of the disputations scheduled for March or April by at least two months though it is not possible to make any reliable prediction how the COVID-19 crisis will further develop.

- It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidates to organize an appropriate date of their thesis defense and keep the deaneries and GAUSS Office informed about any change of date.

- In case of an important reason, it is possible to take the doctoral examination (colloquium with presentation and oral defense) using an appropriate video system. The recommendations by the data protection officer of the University apply.

- Note of caution: Experience tells that such video-based meetings are often subject to technical challenges such as interrupted connections or poor sound/video quality so that they have to be terminated.

- A video-based disputation requires the consent by the PhD candidate and all members of the examination board, as well as the approval by the speaker of the respective doctoral program
by email or in writing (by post). This consent should be sent to the GAUSS Office (in cc to the respective deanery).

- The GAUSS Office will be able to assist with technical issues regarding the video-based disputation.
- The video-based disputation in an electronic meeting room is limited to a maximum of 20 participants (including the PhD candidate and the six members of the examination board. All guests who want to participate within these capacity limits need to register (name and Email address) at least three days prior to the disputation with the GAUSS Office. The participation of guests is at the discretion of the chairperson of the examination board.
- In case of technical difficulties that affect the presentation and participation of the examinee or of members of the examination board, the chairperson of the examination board may decide to terminate the disputation at any time. In this case, an alternative date will be required for repeating the examination. In order to ensure stability of video/audio transmission, it may be required to reduce the number of online participants and limit it to the PhD candidate and the members of the examination board. Should an unstable video/audio connection require the participants to reconnect, and reconnections prove to be non-satisfactory, the disputation shall be terminated after a decision based on common sense.
- At the end of the thesis defense the examination board will convene in a closed online session. Once an agreement has been reached, the examinee will be invited to rejoin the online meeting and will be informed about the results.

(7) Thesis publication

- Thesis publications are not possible until further notice due to the shutdown of the SUB.
- Should your publication deadline expire within the next weeks, please contact the GAUSS Office by email to ask for an extension of the deadline. The submission deadline will be extended up to one month after the end of the current COVID 19-related state of emergency.

(8) Doctoral graduation ceremony (Verkündung)

- We regret to say that the doctoral graduation ceremony on April 24th, 2020 is cancelled.
- The next ceremony will take place on July 24th, 2020.
- If you have been registered for the ceremony in April, you will be re-registered for July. Please understand that, since we will have to accommodate a double amount of participants, we cannot allow guests at the ceremony in July.

We very much hope that the situation will improve soon and that we will then be available for you again as usual.

Thank you for your understanding, and keep well!

Your GAUSS Office