

COVID-19-related measures taken by the GFA - Information for GFA PhD students

(Last update: 24.04.2020)

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

(1) GFA office and correspondence

- The GFA Office is closed until further notice. In urgent cases you can reach us via email or phone (0551 39 14048 and 0551 39 21702 from 9 till 13).
- Please do not send us any documents by post – only send electronic versions (e.g. scans or PDFs). 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, admission to PhD programme, etc.) will only be sent by email.

(2) GFA courses

- Some of the classes are now offered as online courses, such as the online project management course “FastForward” and the course “Statistical Basics for PhD students”. We will provide further information for participants by email.

(3) Thesis Committee (TC) Meetings

- Please hold your thesis committee meeting via videoconference as long as face-to-face meetings are not feasible.
- After your video-based TC meeting, please send the protocol of the meeting to all of the members and ask them for confirmation.

We ask you to include the following sentences instead of the signatures of the TC members on the protocol:

“All thesis committee members participated in the thesis committee meeting. The protocol was approved by all members.”

- After they confirmed the protocol, please send it to us via email (gfa@uni-goettingen.de) with your TC members in cc.
- Likewise, applications for thesis extension should be discussed in the virtual TC meeting.

(4) Application for admission to the doctoral examination

- Please submit the form “[Application for admission to the doctoral examination](#)” and your documents as stated in the form to the GFA office (PhD students of the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology) or to the examination office (PhD students of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences) by email.
- Dates stay as usual:

- As a PhD student of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, please check the dates for handing in your thesis: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/551708.html>
- As a PhD student of the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology, please get in touch with the GFA office by email if you plan to hand in your thesis.

(5) Thesis submissions

- The submission of your dissertation has to be made electronically until further notice (email).
- On the day of submission, please send us the complete dissertation identical with the print version. If you do not have the possibility to scan, also photos of the forms (which must be clear enough to read) can be sent as a combined word or PDF file. Please note that you still need to print one hardcopy, which we will need for our archive. This hardcopy needs to be submitted to the GFA office (PhD at the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology) or the examination office (PhD at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences) within one month after the current COVID-19-related state of emergency has ended. There will be no need for additional hardcopies sent to the office.
- Please discuss with your examination board whether a member may request a printed version for his/her personal use afterwards and, if necessary, forward the dissertation independently to the examiners.

(6) Oral doctoral examinations (Disputations)

- Oral examinations are feasible as long as the [Regulations and Measures for Protection against Infection](#) as communicated by the university are taken (see 2b) and c)).
- It is the responsibility of the PhD student to organize an appropriate date for their thesis defense and keep the GFA office (Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology) or the examination office respectively (Faculty of Agricultural Sciences) 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 videoconference system, see information by the [GWVG](#) for recommendations and licenses.
Note that videoconferencing will also be included in the new § 11a of the doctoral degree regulation.
- Note of caution: Experience has shown that 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. The [recommendations by the data protection officer](#) of the University apply.
- A video-based disputation requires the written consent of the PhD student and all members of the examination board. Please send this written consent via email to the GFA office (PhD at the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology) or to the examination office (PhD at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences). As soon as we receive the documents, we will ask the representative of the graduate committee for approval.
- 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 student and the members of the examination board. Should an unstable video/audio connection require the participants to reconnect, the disputation must be terminated after three reconnections proved to be insufficient. If the examination time is shortened due to technical issues, the examination can be extended by the time previously lost.

- 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

- Please submit your [correction slip](#) via email to the GFA office or to the examination office either with your first supervisor in cc or directly sent from your first supervisor.
- If you want to publish your thesis now, please contact us in advance.
- Should your publication deadline expire within the next weeks, it automatically extends to one month after the end of the current COVID 19-related state of emergency as announced on the website of the Göttingen University.

(8) Doctoral graduation ceremony (Verkündung) at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences

We regret to say that the doctoral graduation ceremony on May 24th, 2020 is cancelled. Please understand that we are currently unable to make any forecasts regarding the next graduation ceremony. Once fixed, we will communicate the date as well as the conditions on our website and by email.

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 examination office of the Faculty for Agricultural Sciences and your GFA office