



Guidelines for the formal procedure at the public defence of doctoral theses at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Those present at the public defence of a doctoral thesis are the opponent, the doctoral student (respondent), the examining committee members, the chairperson and, as a rule, the main supervisor. The defence is also open to the interested members of the public.

The key participants at the defence are the opponent and the respondent, but it is also very important that the examining committee members actively participate in the discussion of the thesis at the designated time, described below.

There are no detailed regulations on how the opposition and the defence of the dissertation should be presented. A public defence at KTH normally follows the procedure described below, but small deviations may occur.

Public defence

1. The chairperson welcomes those present and introduces the respondent and the opponent. The chairperson states where the research has been conducted, and who, besides the respondent, has contributed to the project. The chairperson concludes the introduction by informing that everyone will be given the opportunity to participate in the discussion after the opponent's review.
2. The chairperson gives the floor to the respondent, so to comment on any formal errors in the printed thesis which might exist.
3. Next, the respondent – or in some cases, the opponent – gives a short summary of the thesis.

The summary should include a definition of the research problem, a description of the results and the scientific and social interest of these results. The summary should focus on the thesis being presented and may not be a lecture on current research problems in the field of the thesis. If the opponent presents this summary, the respondent is thereafter given the opportunity to briefly comment on and complement the summary.

4. The opponent then discusses the thesis with the respondent and should pose questions which mainly concern the work described in the thesis. The discussion is not intended to resemble an interrogation. Sometimes, however, for background, it is necessary to ask supplementary questions.

The opponent declares that the review is completed and may congratulate the respondent. During this part of the defence, the audience may not participate in the discussion.

5. After the opponent's review is concluded, the chairperson invites the examining committee members to discuss the issues which they would like the respondent to further clarify
6. The chairperson then invites everyone present to ask questions and/or comment on the thesis. In the discussion that may follow, the main supervisor, the opponent and the respondent are also allowed to participate.
7. Finally, the chairperson thanks the opponent and respondent, on behalf of KTH and the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

The entire public defence of the doctoral thesis normally takes 2-3 hours.

The examining committee meets as soon as possible after the defence. The chairperson is responsible for giving to the examining committee the form required to record their decision. The chairperson is responsible for conveying this form, after all committee members have signed, to the Doctoral Education Support.