UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Instructions
12 November 2026

Faculty of Science

Procedure at the Disputation

When the participants in the Disputation enter the room, the Disputant who will be defending the dissertation enters first, followed by the Custos (chairperson), and the Opponent enters last.

The correct form of attire for the Disputant, Custos and Opponent is a black dress with long sleeves for ladies, and for gentlemen, a full evening dress with black waistcoat (or, where appropriate, uniforms without decorations). Alternatively, if the Disputant, Custos and Opponent so agree, formal suits may be worn. Where appropriate, participants may wear a doctor's gown (with or without the relevant headdress). Participants holding Nordic doctorates are to carry their doctor's hat in their hand while entering and while leaving the room; during the Disputation the hat is placed upon the table with the lyre facing towards the audience.

When all are seated, the Custos opens the proceedings in the following manner: "As Custos appointed by the Faculty of Science, I declare the beginning of this doctoral Disputation."

The Disputant, standing, then delivers the lectio praecursoria, ie. the introductory lecture, which may not exceed 20 minutes in duration. The lectio begins with the greeting: "Learned Custos, my esteemed Opponent, Ladies and Gentlemen..."

The correction of misprints is not part of the proceedings at the Disputation. The Disputant may submit to the Opponent a written list of errors which he or she himself has found, and this list may be appended to the Opponent's Statement submitted to the Faculty.

On concluding the lectio praecursoria, the Disputant will address the Opponent with the following words: "Professor (or Doctor, etc.) NN, I respectfully beg you, as the Opponent duly appointed by the Faculty of Science for my Disputation, to present your criticisms of my doctoral dissertation."

The Opponent then stands and delivers a short statement concerning the scientific status and significance of the topic of the dissertation, together with other similar comments of a more general nature. After this statement, both Opponent and Disputant resume their seats.
In the examination of the dissertation, the Opponent should begin by addressing methodological and general questions, and then proceed to a detailed scrutiny of the text.

The Opponent may not spend more than four hours on the examination of the dissertation, so that enough time remains for other speakers to present questions or criticisms. If the ex-amination takes a long time, the Custos may announce an intermission. The Disputation may not last longer than six hours in total.

At the conclusion of the Opponent's examination of the dissertation, the Opponent and Disputant stand, and the Opponent delivers a final statement. At the end of the final statement, the opponent will state whether they will propose for the faculty, the dissertation to be approved. The Disputant, still standing, then thanks the Opponent.

The Disputant next turns to the audience, and invites their contributions as follows: "I now respectfully invite any members of the learned audience who wish to offer criticisms of my dissertation to request a permission to speak from the Custos."
The Custos may then grant a permission to speak for members of the audience, and is responsible for ensuring that the Disputant is able to reply immediately to the criticism presented, and that the discussion does not stray from the matter at hand.

Finally, the Custos stands up and terminates the proceedings as follows: "This public defence of the doctoral dissertation is now concluded."

The general description of the dissertation's examining process at the University of Turku is available in: https://www.utu.fi/en/research/dissertations/guidelines

The Opponent is required to submit a statement and a summary form for the evaluation to the faculty after the disputation. They have to contain a proposal for the grade of the dissertation.

The doctoral dissertation is graded as *accepted with honours*, *accepted,* or *rejected.*
In order to receive the grade *accepted with honours*, the dissertation must be in the top 10% of dissertations in its field internationally.

The grade of the doctoral dissertation is formed on the basis of the opponent's and the pre-examiners' statements. If the Opponent and both pre-examiners all agree that the dissertation is in the top 10% of theses in its field internationally, then the dissertation may be accepted with honours.

In the Opponent's assessment of the doctoral dissertation, special attention should be paid to the following points:

- An evaluation of the topic of the dissertation, including consideration of the number of problems which needed to be solved. The significance of the conclusions should be assessed in terms of the following criteria: to what extent new ideas or insights are offered; how the problems posed in the dissertation have been solved; the quality of the Disputant's observations; and any improvement in precision achieved in the measurement of findings.
- An evaluation of the originality in both the planning and the execution of the research.
- An evaluation of the quality of the Disputant's achievement, on the basis of the care with which it has been undertaken, the difficulty of the methods used, the development (where appropriate) of new methods, and their application in the research.
- An evaluation of the Disputant's mastery of the field of research and familiarity with the relevant literature.
- An evaluation of the structuring of the dissertation, its manner of presentation, and the style and use of language.
- An evaluation of the disputant's ability to defend their research during the public defence.

Language of the statement

The statement can be written in Finnish if all signatories of the contribution statement understand Finnish. Otherwise, English is recommended.