

INFO KIT for defences – student

What happens on the defence day and day before?

- Dinner with the opponent on the previous day (optional):
 - Custos, opponent and thesis defender
 - Get to know each other and go through the arrangements and proceedings, but no discussion about the thesis or examination
 - If not arranged, these can be discussed during lunch
- The defence day typically includes:
 - Lunch with the opponent, custos and thesis defender (see also dinner)
 - Defence
 - Coffee (if you wish to offer)
 - [Post-doctoral party](#) (if you choose to arrange it)

Your responsibilities

- **Practical arrangements:** Organising the defence is usually taken care of with the department (assistant services), but the main responsibility is yours. You are also responsible for the possible arrangements and reservations for coffee catering and post-doctoral party. You can read more here: <https://www.aalto.fi/en/doctoral-education/preparing-for-the-public-defence>
- **Publishing and printing of the thesis:** Place the order 24 days before the defence at the latest (Unigrafia's requirement). Check [instructions for publishing](#) and [Unigrafia's pages](#).
 - In questions related to publishing and printing process, please be in contact with Unigrafia's services directly, and in questions related to public display, adding errata page (if you notice a mistake in the thesis afterwards): julkaisusarjat@aalto.fi
 - The official public display is arranged online **7 days** prior to the defence at https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/doc_public/eonly/riiputus/. Unigrafia will prepare the final version of the thesis and send it to the Learning Centre. Learning Centre will take care of scheduling the start of the display time. The public display will take place via the event page of your defence.
- Prepare your [lectio praecursoria](#)
- Prepare the **public defence announcement**
 - DES will prepare the preliminary event page of your defence at Aalto.fi, but **your responsibility** is to submit the announcement text and other necessary information via webropol, [link and instructions](#) for writing the announcement. Please submit this information 2-3 weeks before the defence.
- **Distribute your thesis**
 - **Send soft copy of your thesis (pdf) to the opponent(s):** It's recommended to **use the proof version** (combine the separate pdfs for covers and thesis). You are not allowed to be in contact with the opponent(s) in any other way.

- Distribute printouts: Unigrafia will deliver the printed books to **Maarintie 8 (PL 15500)**. The janitors will inform you when the books have arrived. It's good to check if they have delivered already the copies to **library, physical public display and DPC Chair**. The library will contact you afterwards if they haven't received their archive copy. Read more about the [compulsory distribution](#) at ELEC.
- **Request graduation**
 - You need to **officially request graduation in Sisu** before you can get the degree. You can request graduation already before the defence but **at the latest 4 days before the meeting in which the thesis should be evaluated** (see [meeting schedules](#)).
 - Please submit also the [Consent for contact after graduation](#). There we ask for your contact information for further contacts regarding thesis awards, etc.

The role of the custos and the department

- The custos is responsible for hosting the opponent. The custos is also supervising that the public defence follows the guidelines of Aalto University and is responsible for instructing the opponent(s) on practicalities of the defence.
- Once the opponent is nominated and the defence confirmed, the assistant services of ELEC (assistants-elec@aalto.fi) will contact you regarding defence practicalities (and the opponent regarding booking travels and accommodation). They also arrange the defence lunch and help with other room reservations, if needed.
- You can contact the department assistants via the address: assistants-elec@aalto.fi. Please use your name on the headline. The assistants will also contact the opponent regarding travelling and accommodation arrangements.

Dress code and proceedings at the defence

- [Dress code for the day](#)
- [Protocol in a nutshell](#). See also **appendix** at the end of this document for more detailed protocol.
- The defence usually lasts 2–3 hours, but no more than 4 hours.

After defence:

- The custos delivers the statement of the opponent(s) to the ELEC study coordinator (preferably as a pdf via email).
- After checking the statement, I'll ask if you approve the statement or wish to make an official reply. If the next meeting is close, you will need to reply to my question in any case.
- The theses are [approved on regular meetings](#). If the statement arrives even a couple of days before the meeting, the thesis can be evaluated if you approve the statement.
- **Approval of the thesis by the DPC**. You will graduate on the next possible graduation date if you have applied for graduation in Sisu. Graduation date = ending date of your study right.

Appendix: Protocol and lines in ELEC defences

1. Opening of the examination

(Arrival, see [website](#)). When everyone has taken their place, the custos shall welcome everyone, introduce the thesis defender and the opponent(s) and declare the proceedings open:

At this defence, the doctoral thesis of _____, Master of Science (in Technology), will be presented for examination for the degree of Doctor of Science.

Professor/Doctor _____ of the _____ (university) will act as the official opponent.

As the official Custos appointed by the Aalto University School of Electrical Engineering, I declare this defence open.

2. Lectio praecursoria

The thesis defender shall stand to deliver the lectio praecursoria, which shall last a maximum of twenty minutes. There are [ELEC guidelines for the lectio](#) available.

The opening phrase is "***Honoured Custos, honoured opponents, esteemed audience***".

After the lectio praecursoria the thesis defender, still standing, shall say in the language of the defence: "***I ask you, honoured professor (/doctor) _____ appointed as opponent by Aalto University School of Electrical Engineering to present the observations that you consider appropriate for this doctoral thesis***".

3. Opponent's opening statement, examination and closing statement

"-----", see [website](#) for more information.

4. Additional opponents

The thesis defender, remaining standing, thanks the opponent and then the opponent sits down. The thesis defender turns to the audience and says:

"Esteemed audience, I ask those of you who have observations to make on the doctoral thesis here presented to kindly request the floor from the custos."

Traditionally, the opportunity to ask questions is reserved only for **official observations**. If such exist, custos makes clear that observations shall be made to the department within two weeks of the defence

5. Conclusion of the examination

The custos shall ***present the thanks of the Aalto University School of Electrical Engineering to the opponent(s)***.

The custos shall close the defence by standing and saying, "***I declare this public examination closed***".

The protagonists leave the hall in the same order as they entered, first the thesis defender, then the custos and finally the opponent(s).