

As of February 18, 2021

**Information for Students, Study Applicants, and Doctoral Students
about the Execution of Oral Exams via Video Conferencing at KIT
during the Corona Crisis**

5th updated version

KIT makes every effort to minimize the disadvantages for you in spite of the ongoing Corona crisis. To the extent possible under the present circumstances, the Executive Board and the KIT Departments wish to help you by mitigating the impairments resulting from the conversion of studies to digital formats. Already in the past and current semesters, online oral exams via video conferencing have been established as an alternative form of examination.

With § 32a and § 32b of the Act of Baden-Württemberg on Universities and Colleges (Landeshochschulgesetz - LHG), video-proctored online exams, and online oral exams via video conferencing as well, are regulated by law. The KIT Corona Statutes have been adapted in line with the revision of the LHG. The rules on oral online exams via video conferencing are laid down in §§ 4 and 5 of the KIT Corona Statutes (cf.: http://www.sle.kit.edu/downloads/AmtlicheBekanntmachungen/2020_AB_024.pdf and http://www.sle.kit.edu/downloads/AmtlicheBekanntmachungen/2021_AB_005.pdf).

The LHG revisions on online exams are directly applicable to doctoral studies. The principles of this handhout hence also apply to doctoral procedures.

Below please find relevant information about online oral exams via video conferencing.

1. Video conferencing feasibility

The LHG revisions are independent of the pandemic. Online oral exams via video conferencing hence can be conducted even in the absence of infections provided that the exams are suitable for online video conferencing as regards content-related, didactic, or other aspects (e.g. the exam subject matter). The decision on the suitability for online video conferencing lies with the examiners.

2. Voluntariness

According to § 32a of the LHG, proctored video-based exams, i.e. also oral exams via video conferencing, are subject to the proviso of voluntariness, unless they are conducted on the premises of the university or in a test center. Voluntariness can be ensured in particular by offering an on-campus exam at the same time, if this is legally permissible.

3. Exam trials

The students shall be given the opportunity to test the online exam framework conditions in terms of technical prerequisites, equipment, and exam venue in good time before the real exam.

4. Deregistration and change in exam type

The time within which it is possible to withdraw from oral exams without giving reasons is laid down in the Studies and Examination Regulations. The rules set out also apply to online oral exams via video conferencing. Please contact your relevant examination board to find out whether a different extended deregistration period applies until immediately before exams in the winter semester of 2020/2021. A change from an online oral exam via video conferencing to an oral on-campus exam can be made up to one week before the date of the online oral exam via video conferencing.

5. Identity check

Prior to the start of the exam, the examinee must present to the camera the student ID or an official photo identification upon request by the examiner. If using the ID card or passport, the student is allowed to hide or cover information (such as ID card or passport number) not required for identification.

6. Access to video conferencing

You will receive access to the video conference from your examiner in good time before the start of the exam.

7. Technical requirements

To participate in an online oral exam via video conferencing, you will need:

- A computer/laptop or tablet suitable for conducting video conferences. The use of a smartphone is not recommended, as it may not be suitable to follow the exam sufficiently.
- Interference-free image and sound transmission is the prerequisite for oral online exams via video conferencing:
 - You therefore need a webcam and
 - a stable and sufficiently fast internet connection.
 - In addition, the use of a headset is recommended for optimal audio connection.

To try out in particular the audio and video connection, it is strongly recommended to have a test conference prior to the exam.

8. Data processing

The legal basis for processing of the examinee's audio and image data results from art. 6 para. 1 subsection 1(e), para. 3 subsection 1 (b) of the DS-GVO in connection with 32a para. 2 p. 3, para. 1 p. 1 of the LHG in conjunction with § 20 of the KIT Act in conjunction with the KIT Corona Statutes.

In line with the above, the KIT has released a video conferencing solution hosted at the KIT (**on-premises** solution - currently released: **Jitsi**) to be used primarily for online exams. The associated privacy policy is stored at <https://vc-exam.scc.kit.edu/einwilligung-vpbd.php> and

does **not** need to be signed separately. When participating in the oral exam via video conferencing, the students will take note of the privacy policy.

9. Execution of exams

The exam is conceived as a **video transmission** type of exam. It must be ensured that examiners, observers, and examinee can **see and hear** each other at all times. In particular, it must be ensured that the examinee can see all examiners at all times (i.e., not only the examiner who is currently asking questions) and all examiners can see the examinee. The examinee shall be obliged to activate the camera and microphone functions of the proctoring equipment. Recording or room monitoring beyond this are not permitted. Moreover, video proctoring must be set up in such a way that data protection and the privacy of the examinees are not restricted more than is necessary for justified purposes of control.

10. Exam room

The equipment of the **exam room** must be suitable for the purpose of the exam. When exams take place outside the university and outside test centers, examinees, when choosing the exam venue, must ensure that images/sounds of third parties are not transmitted.

11. Minutes

The **minutes shall be taken** as usual. Recording of the exam or any other storage of sound or image data are not permitted, unless necessary for transmission of the proctored online exam. The examiner will point this out to the examinee before start of the exam.

12. Dealing with malfunctions and disturbances

Please bear in mind that unforeseeable imponderables may arise in this particular exam situation, e.g.¹

- The technology may fail at any time. This may cause and reinforce negative emotions.
- Interruptions and overlaps may occur in the conversations.

¹ Source: TU Dresden: Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Branch of Study: Psychology, Board of Examiners Master's Course Psychology: Human Performance in Socio-technical Systems: Oral Exams via Video Conferencing

- The frequency of nonverbal acts increases (communication takes a more dynamic course).
- Communication problems may occur, e.g. because control of the right to speak is more difficult without direct eye contact and because the general time delay (e.g. asynchronies) and the omission of familiar signals (gestures) lead to uncertainties.
- Action problems may occur because there is no common physical and social context (e.g., salutation, directing attention by pointing to objects, verifying the location and general visibility of objects).
- Deterioration in performance may occur due to time differences alone.
- In addition, to ensure immediate communication and interaction between examinee and examiner, it is necessary to ensure that the time delay of the transmission paths is kept to a minimum and that data throughput is high.

§ 32b of the LHG and § 4 para. 7 of the KIT Corona Statutes regulate the handling of malfunctions and disturbances. A distinction is made between malfunctions in the transmission or processing of the exam questions and difficulties in the transmission of images or sound.

- If the transmission or processing of the exam questions or video-based supervision demonstrably are not technically feasible at the time of the exam in the case of a proctored online exam, the exam shall be terminated and the attempt shall be disregarded.
- If the image or sound transmission demonstrably has been temporarily disrupted during a proctored online exam, the exam shall be continued after troubleshooting. If the technical malfunction continues and the examiner deems that troubleshooting will not be successful, the exam will be terminated also and the attempt will be disregarded.

Errors and malfunctions during online exams shall in principle be treated in the same way as errors and malfunctions during on-campus exams. Students who are affected by such errors are requested to **immediately** report all technical problems to the exam supervisor. If the cause of a technical malfunction cannot be clearly determined, the examinee can be instructed to have the next exam attempt on campus.

Please contact the examiner in charge or the examination board for all questions regarding online oral exams via video conferencing.