Regulations for conducting doctoral defenses at the UWGS during the Corona pandemic
(“Corona Regulations”)

2. They are based on and in accordance with the framework (“Rahmenordnung”) for online examinations enacted by the University of Würzburg in April 2020.
3. They come into effect 21 April 2020 and are initially limited until the end of the summer semester 2020.
4. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that theses defenses at the UWGS can still take place during the Corona pandemic despite having to partially deviate from the procedure described in the graduation regulations. Any aspect of a thesis defense not addressed by the Corona Regulations, including but not limited to minimum invitation times, duration and content of a defense etc., remain exactly as prescribed in the graduation regulations.
5. The following three variants are to be considered with decreasing order of preference. Variant three must only be considered if variant one and two are not feasible due to travel bans or other similarly strong obstacles.
   - **Variant 1**: Candidate, examiners, minute taker and chairperson are present in person under reasonable safety measurements (distance, ventilated room), and the public being admitted by video conferencing
   - **Variant 2**: Candidate and the majority of the examiners, the minute taker and the chairperson present in person, additional examiners and the public being admitted by video conferencing
   - **Variant 3**: Fully video based (no two persons in one room).
6. The doctoral candidate will initiate and manage the process to find an agreement among everybody involved for a date, place and in particular the modality for the thesis defense. He or she will keep the graduate school office informed about the intended variant as described in (5), any potential changes thereof or any circumstances that may require particular technical support.
7. Any involvement of video-components requires the consent of the chairperson, the candidate and all examiners in writing: an email by everyone concerned to the office of the graduate school suffices. Consent requires that everybody agrees on the medium used for the video conference. The university has opened the possibility to use the commercial platform Zoom via university licenses in addition to the public DFN network. The university’s Rechenzentrum continuously updates other approved video conferencing platforms and respective instructions.
8. The Graduate School office provides a technical officer, who assists everybody in the planning of a video based defense and helps to avoid or overcome technical problems during the defense.
9. Video-conferencing may be affected by poor sound/video quality. If the presentation and communication between the attendees is compromised, the chairperson may interrupt at any time. Should a reasonable attempt to reconnect yield unsatisfactory results, the chairperson must terminate the defense. The attempt does not count and everybody concerned will agree on a new date.
10. Public participants have to register at least one day prior to the defense with the graduate school office, providing their full name and email address. Participants will receive a password to enter the video conference. Participants must join the meeting with audio and video to reveal their identity. Participants must be informed upon registration as well as when joining the meeting that they are not allowed to record any aspect of the meeting. The number of public participants may be restricted within the technical limitations of the conferencing platform.
11. At the end of the thesis defense and if applicable, the examiners and the chairperson will convene in a separate closed online room to determine the result of the defense. The candidate will then be admitted to that session and the chairperson will disclose the result. The public will be excluded from the session at that point. In case the candidate participates online, he or she will receive an e-mail by the chairperson the same day in lieu of the doctoral certificate (Prüfungszeugnis). The latter will then follow by regular mail.
12. In case of unexpected and unforeseen issues, the chairperson may rule on individual procedural issues after having heard the candidate and consulted with the examiners.

gez. Prof. Dr. Caroline Kisker, acting UWGS Dean