

## Directive on the use of videoconferencing in thesis defences

1. The rule at the Institute is to have the physical presence of all participants in the room where the defence takes place: the candidate, the president, the thesis supervisor (or, as appropriate, the two co-supervisors), the internal reader, and the external expert. The use of the videoconferencing is the exception and is only possible in the cases mentioned below.
2. The possibility of participating in the defence by videoconference only applies to the external expert. It may also concern the thesis supervisor, but only if they are on sabbatical leave and unable to travel to Geneva. In no case may two members of the same jury be physically absent during the defence.
3. There are two situations in which videoconferencing may be used:
  - a. if, in the opinion of the thesis supervisor, an external expert is required as they are the only or by far the best possible choice, and their presence is made difficult by distance/travel complications/price of air travel ticket;
  - b. if a defence has already been organized and reasons of force majeure (personal, weather, etc.) prevent the physical presence of the expert.
4. The Office of the Director of Studies authorizes the use of videoconferencing and the PhD programme secretariat organizes the process using the technological facilities in use at the Institute (Polycom).
5. The administrative services concerned set up the required equipment and provide support before, during and after the videoconference; this may include, for example, performing a test before the defence.
6. The external expert who participates by videoconference must ensure, on their side, that the videoconference link (sound and picture) functions well and is of a good quality. A test can be carried out for this purpose, and the authorisation is confirmed only if the result is found to be satisfactory. A check on the identity of the external expert will be done, if necessary, before the start of the defence.
7. The external expert who is not physically present in the room participates in the defence, interacts with the candidate and participates in the jury's deliberations in the same way as other members. If the connection (sound and/or picture) is interrupted during the videoconference and cannot be restored, the defence is postponed to a later date.
8. Any costs incurred in connection with videoconferencing shall be borne by the Institute, subject to prior acceptance by the Office of the Director of Studies and within the limits of the budget provided for this purpose.

Approved by the Academic Committee, June 2013